**■ BUSINESS / B1**

**Group unveils P8-B blueprint for Boni 'city center'**

**■ SPORTS / A24**

**Heat rip Nets anew; Clippers shade Suns**

**■ NEWS / A7**

**US restores diplomatic ties with Libya**

**■ ACROSS / A15**

**6,000-km, 22-day cross-country trip on a motorcycle**

### Senate presidency still anybody's game–Nene

NAKU... MARAMING PANG GULO, DI MAKA KA-SIGURO

By TJ Burgonio and Juliet Labog-Javellana

IN THE FIGHT FOR THE Senate presidency, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. should not discount the votes of

SENATE/ A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, May 16, 2006 ★★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 157 P18 website: www.inq7.net

### Childless couples to join Obando fertility rites today

By Carmela Reyes
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

OBANDO, BULACAN—MOPY RAYMUNDO, AT 34, has been longing for a child and would have wanted to celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday with a baby in her arms.

Raymundo has been married for two years but

CHILDLESS/ A5

# Military, Reds linked to slays of 38 leftists

## But Razon says no sign of gov't crackdown

By Luige A. del Puerto

A POLICE TASK FORCE yesterday tagged soldiers and paramilitary forces as suspects in the murder of 25 political activists, and said 13 other killings might have been the result of a purge within the communist ranks.

They were among the 122 cases of killings of political militants recorded since 2001 when President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed power, according to data released to media by the newly created Task Force Usig.

Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr., task force head, said one other killing of a militant member was the upshot of an encounter between government forces and the communist New People's Army.

The rest of the cases were still being investigated, he said.

An INQUIRER tally showed 123 activists have been killed during the five years of the Arroyo presidency.

Militant groups have blamed government forces for the killing of their members while the military has disclaimed responsibility, saying many of the slain activists could have been killed by their own comrades as part of a new purge within the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Asked if his data confirmed allegations of a military crackdown on leftists, Razon said:

"No, I'd like to clarify that they are just suspected (of involvement). It's not an outright indication that the military or paramilitary groups are involved."

He said blaming the military for most of the killings was a

MILITARY/ A6

**EARTH BEAUTIES**
**Catherine Untalan (center), newly crowned Miss Philippines-Earth, is flanked by (from left) Katrina Rigets, Miss Philippines-Water; Ginger Conejero, Miss Philippines-Air; Francis Diane Cervantes, Miss Philippines-Fire, and Reena Sarmiento, Miss Philippines-Ecotourism. The coronation rites were held Sunday at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City.** ***(See story in Metro, Page A17.)*** RODEL ROTONI

## Senators to oppose Con-ass bid, says Drilon

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

ON THE EVE OF A MALACAÑANG initiative to mobilize support for a legislative agenda that includes Charter change, the Senate announced it would oppose a House proposal to transform Congress into a constituent assembly as a mode of amending the Constitution.

Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday said the Senate would reject a House attempt to push for a constituent assembly with the two chambers voting as one to achieve the objective, instead of voting separately as the upper chamber had insisted.

Drilon dismissed the statement on Sunday of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago that the Senate would be abolished by July and expressed confidence the Supreme Court would uphold the tradition of the Senate and the House voting separately on key legislative measures.

Drilon, who has withdrawn support from President Macapagal-Arroyo, said he would attend today's meeting of the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) in Malacañang to defend the Senate position.

He said calling for a constituent assembly, or Con-ass, was No. 2 on the agenda of Ledac, which is composed of the President and officials of the Cabinet, the Senate and the House.

"We are optimistic that political differences can be momentarily set aside to ensure a produc-

SENATORS/ A8

## DAR to use military, police vs resisting landowners

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT IS PREpared to enlist the police and military in implementing the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in areas where there is armed resistance by landowners, the Department of Agrarian Reform said.

The intervention of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines would be sought in "hot spots" or areas where there is strong, even violent, resistance by landowners to CARP and an active mass movement.

"The AFP and PNP will support the DAR in the installation (of farmer beneficiaries) if an armed resistance of landowners is involved," Undersecretary Bernie Cruz said in an interview.

The DAR is leading an interagency task force created last week to address the cases of violence, harassment and killings in the implementation of the CARP.

The task force includes the AFP, PNP, Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Farmers' groups also attended the task force's first meeting on May 12.

The Pambansang Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (Unorka) said the DAR had asked the group to submit a list of provinces where landowners were harassing farmer beneficiaries and blocking the CARP implementation.

Unorka and Task Force Mapal-

DAR TO USE/ A6

## GMA cuts tariff on crude oil imports

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TO EASE THE IMPACT OF RISING fuel prices and hold down the cost of doing business in the Philippines, President Macapagal-Arroyo has slashed the tariff on imports of crude oil, capital equipment and spare parts.

In Executive Order No. 527, Ms Arroyo ordered oil tariffs reduced from 3 percent to between 2 and zero percent depending on "trigger levels" set by the Department of Energy in coordination with the finance and trade departments.

"An automatic tariff mechanism, based on certain triggers indexed to international oil prices, would soften the impact of high and rising world prices on the economy and the consuming public without necessarily draining government revenues," Ms Arroyo said in her order signed Friday.

She said the oil tariff would be restored to 3 percent once international prices moved below the trigger price levels.

The executive order would be in effect over six months, subject to government review.

Ms Arroyo issued the order

GMA CUTS/ A6

## Peso back to 52-level vs US dollar

By Doris C. Dumlao
*Business*

THE PESO YESTERDAY TUMBLED back to the 52 level against the US dollar as importers scrambled to build up their dollar reserves ahead of the import season in the third quarter and foreign investors cashed out of local equities and government securities.

At the Philippine Dealing System, the peso closed at its intraday low of 52.15 to the dollar after opening at 51.83, shedding a hefty 44 centavos from its Friday's finish of 51.71. It was the peso's weakest finish since the currency closed at 52.20 on Feb. 24.

Total value traded at the Philippine Dealing System on Monday amounted to a hefty $672.68 million.

Marcelo Ayes, chief currency dealer at Equitable PCI Bank, said importers had started buying dollars this early to pay for shipments expected in the third quarter.

Ayes explained that importers

PESO/ A8

## *Volunteer moms take care of special kids*

By Blanche S. Rivera

SPECIAL KIDS NEED SPECIAL moms.

The Katipunan ng mga Magulang ng mga Batang May Kapansanan (KMBK) is a volunteer group of some 20 women who take care of special children and, sometimes, even their parents.

The women themselves are moms to differently abled children (the politically correct term for the disabled).

For the past four years, they have been quietly knocking on doors of households in Mandaluyong City to find special children who are neglected due to either the indifference or poverty of their parents.

"It's in our hearts to help because our children are also disabled. We know how it feels," volunteer mother Gilda Mendoza says. Her 15-year-old daughter is deaf and they communicate by sign language.

Mendoza shares with the INQUIRER her shock, despair and, eventually, her coming to terms

VOLUNTEER/ A5

**SPECIAL child Jenny Gonzales enjoys a therapy session with volunteers of the Katipunan ng mga Magulang ng mga Batang May Kapansanan Gilda Mendoza, Magyeth Cruz and Rosalie and Jean Gonzalès.** JOAN BONDOC

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Western sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/15/06

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Cloudy with Rains | Iloilo/Bacolod | Cloudy with Rains |
| Baguio | Cloudy with Rains | Roxas | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tuguegarao | Cloudy with Rains | Cebu | Cloudy with Rains |
| Laoag | Cloudy with Rains | Tacloban | Cloudy with Rains |
| Clark Zone | Cloudy with Rains | Gen. Santos | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tagaytay | Cloudy with Rains | Zamboanga | Cloudy with Rains |
| Legazpi | Cloudy with Rains | Cagayan de Oro | Cloudy with Rains |
| Calapan | Cloudy with Rains | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |

# *Second* FRONTPAGE

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HERE WE GO AGAIN

# New impeach case set vs GMA

**By Philip C. Tubeza**

THE NEW IMPEACHMENT COMPLAINT AGAINST President Macapagal-Arroyo will be ready by the end of the month and could include the spate of killings of leftist activists and acts of the administration recently, an opposition leader said yesterday.

ESCUDERO

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero told a news conference that the impeachment team would be activated this week, as Congress resumes its session, and San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora would be the lead prosecutor.

Escudero said the complaint would be filed "at the latest" during President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address on July 24.

"If there are additions to the complaint, these would be about the killings (of militants) and human rights abuses and the Supreme Court decisions about the abuse of office of President Arroyo these recent months," he said.

"These would fall under the category of betrayal of public trust at the very least," he added.

Escudero said that some of the witnesses had left but the opposition has found new ones who could testify on election fraud that occurred "right inside in the House of Representatives."

"Those who left were not crucial. They were supposed to give only supporting or collaborative testimony. The primary (witnesses) are still there and they remain committed about their testimonies on what happened during the last elections," he added.

Escudero said that there was a consensus among House minority members that those among them who would not support the President's impeachment should leave their group.

"Each member of the minority should support the impeachment (complaint) that we will file. Those who would not should probably no longer remain with the minority," Escudero said. "We have the freedom to choose if we want to be with the minority or the majority. That is what we are going to make clear now."

Escudero said that the members of the House majority should not dismiss the new complaint even before they have read it.

"I hope they and President Arroyo see that this is an opportunity, not just for her but for the country, to get over this current political crisis," he said.

Besides building up a legal case against the President, Escudero said that the minority would also work to get the required 79 votes to impeach the President.

"I'm confident that we will work harder to get that number. Whether we get it or not is an issue that might only be answered by history," Escudero said.

## *We're ready, say Palace allies*

### Administration poised to smother new impeachment try

**By Michael Lim Ubac**

PICHAY

CAGAS

PRO-ADMINISTRATION LAWmakers said yesterday they still had the numbers and were ready to smother a new attempt to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo which members of the opposition said they plan to launch next month.

Reps. Prospero Pichay Jr., Anthony Miranda and Douglas Cagas said that the opposition did not have the numbers, nor the support of the people to impeach Ms Arroyo.

"They may be busy at work fabricating their new evidence and cases against the President, but we are also prepared to do our own homework," said Pichay, stressing that the majority would easily thwart any new complaint.

He chided House Minority Leader Francis Escudero for threatening to expel from the minority opposition lawmakers who would refuse to support the new impeachment complaint.

"That threat is an insult to the members of the House, especially those opposition members who found the impeachment complaints filed last year wanting in form and substance," said Pichay.

"Rather than resort to arm-twisting, threats and blandishments, the minority should just redouble their efforts to present a credible and compelling impeachment complaint. Otherwise, they will again be doomed to fail," he said.

He warned Escudero not to reduce the impeachment drive to a mere numbers game between the administration and the opposition, claiming that the House majority thumbed down the complaints filed last year because they lacked merit.

"If they want to be more successful this time, then they should peddle an entirely new complaint, since those they submitted last year were already rejected resoundingly by the House," he added.

Miranda said Escudero's threatening his allies in the opposition with expulsion was "a cowardly gesture" and showed the opposition was not confident of mustering the number of votes needed to impeach the President.

Miranda, spokesperson for the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino, said his party would urge the entire administration coalition "not to be distracted by this threat and instead focus on the much-needed reform in the Constitution that will put an end to recurring political crises."

Cagas said the plan to file another impeachment complaint was the continuation of a larger destabilization plot against Ms Arroyo.

"Miserably, again they fail. They will politically fall because of full-blown disenchantment of our people at the opposition," said Cagas.

## Senators vow to pass long-delayed P1.053-T budget early next month

**By TJ Burgonio**

SENATORS HAVE PLEDGED TO WORK DOUBLE time to pass the long-delayed P1.053-trillion budget measure in the first week of June.

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan announced on the floor last night that the senators agreed to hold sessions five days a week, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., in order to give full attention to seven major bills, including the budget, between now and adjournment.

Congress normally holds sessions Mondays to Wednesdays.

Fresh from a month-long recess, the senators went to a caucus after the roll-call to discuss ways to speed up action on pending bills, chiefly the budget, in the next four weeks.

"We will work double time to pass the budget," Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., finance committee chair, told reporters before the caucus, expressing the agreement reached by senators that they would approve the measure before Congress adjourned sine die on June 9.

Villar said he expected the budget measure to be debated within the next two weeks and to be approved on the floor by the first week of June, leaving the last week for the bicameral conference with their counterparts in the House of Representatives.

He said his committee's report on the measure would be presented on the floor for approval as early as May 22.

"Two weeks will be devoted to discussion and approval, then the last week, we hold the bicameral conference. It's not good if we don't pass it. We prefer to have a new budget," he said.

After months of delay, the House of Representatives passed a P1.04-trillion budget on April 4, a day before it recessed for the Lenten holidays. The budget is usually transmitted to the Senate in mid-November and passed by the year's end.

Going into the caucus, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Villar had already agreed it was necessary to pass the measure before adjournment.

"I have talked with them separately, and they have all agreed on the need to pass the budget before adjournment," Drilon said at a press briefing.

Pimentel confirmed this, but said senators in the minority would scrutinize items in the budget deemed "partisan in nature," including the P5-billion Kilos Asenso Support Fund and the P3-billion Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund.

The Kilos Asenso is a counterpart fund from which the national government intended draw sums to match the "developmental spending" performance of local government units.

The Kalayaan Barangay Program Fund, on the other hand, is meant for at least 500 "conflict-affected" barangays so they could pursue basic infrastructure work from 2005 to 2010.

The six other bills that the Senate pledged to pass are the proposal which seeks to create a credit information bureau, the anti-terror bill, the automated election bill, the proposed electric power industry reform bill, the bio-fuels program bill and the income tax relief bill.

## Malacañang stands by its man at BIR

**By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.**

MALACAÑANG IS STANDING BY ITS MAN AT the Bureau of Internal Revenue despite a P10-billion shortfall in tax collections in April brought about by the steep plunge in corporate tax remittances.

"We should not judge the BIR on just one month's performance. What is important is that we observe its revenue collections over a longer period," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye at a briefing in Malacañang.

But Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, President Macapagal-Arroyo's economic adviser who has called for a revamp at the BIR starting with Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag, said: "One month is in fact too much given the magnitude of the shortfall and the abundance in the economic climate."

Salceda said it was either "incompetence or corruption" that would explain why the BIR's April collection was P10 billion short of target despite the hike in the corporate income tax from 32 to 35 percent beginning in November last year and the increase in the value-added tax (VAT) rate from 10 to 12 percent early this year.

The BIR said corporate tax collections dropped largely due to companies' claims of higher creditable withholding taxes (P4.7 billion), the utilization of last year's minimum corporate income tax (P3.7 billion), decrease in payments of final withholding taxes (P1.7 billion), and decreases in sales and gross receipts (P3.7 billion).

Salceda said the BIR should verify the corporations' claims considering that the business sector enjoyed one of its strongest fourth quarters last year with the economic growth led by the industrial sector.

"Bunye's statement betrays an unfortunate, dismissive posture to an otherwise grave circumstance. That comes close to patronizing and edifying incompetence, nay, pure sleaze in the bureaucracy," Salceda said.

"Is the executive [branch] serious about collections? Here is one chance to demonstrate its intolerance for incompetence."

But Bunye maintained that its critics should give the BIR more time to prove itself.

"Previously, when the BIR's revenues were rising, we did not hear any praise from those criticizing it now. We should have a balanced assessment of the situation," he said.

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# Hawkers dupe 'Da Vinci Code' DVD buyers

HAWKERS ARE REPACKAGING A DOCUMENTARY on the "The Da Vinci Code" as an authentic version of the movie, cashing in on public interest in the religious thriller ahead of its release this week.

The film, based on the best-selling novel of the same title, has whipped up a storm of controversy in the largely Roman Catholic country and the movies' censor has yet to grant it a release permit despite a slated opening date of May 18.

In downtown Manila, DVD hawkers were standing by the authenticity of their "advance copies" of the "Da Vinci Code," retailing at P35.

"This copy came from Malaysia. The movie was already shown there," a vendor called Magda said.

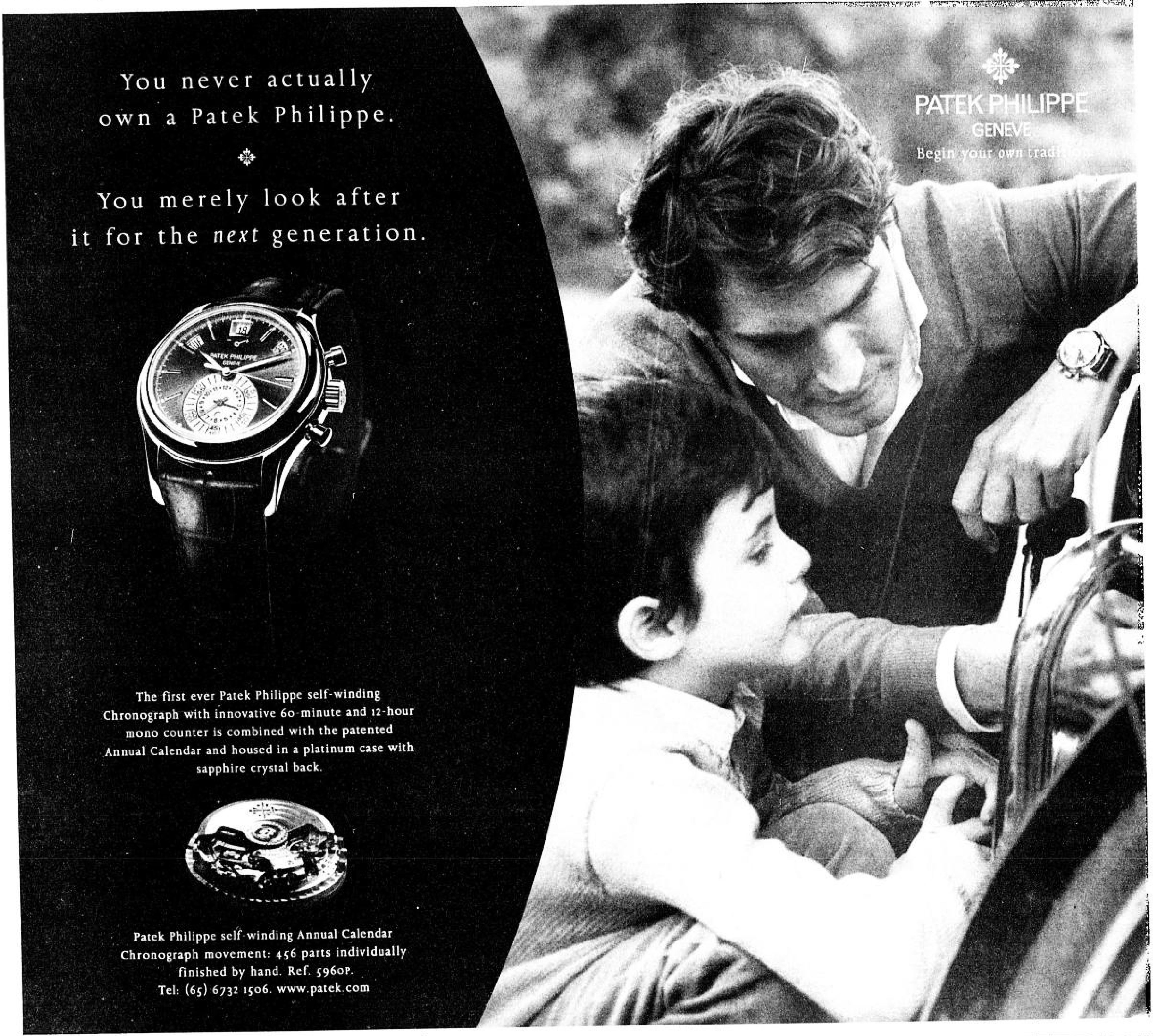
A copy bought from Magda featured not the movie but a one-hour documentary titled "Unlocking the Da Vinci Code."

The movie, starring Tom Hanks, will premiere on May 17 at the Cannes Film Festival in France. The movie will be released on May 18 in Malaysia.

The film's central premise, that Jesus Christ sired a child by Mary Magdalene, has upset many Christians.

"Like in anything negative, let us take this occasion to convert the cinema industry's money-motive production into a pastoral challenge," Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, the Archbishop of Manila, said in a statement.

Rosales urged parishes to organize discussion groups on the divinity of Jesus and the "mistaken impression" that the Church was hiding the truth. *Reuters*



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- **Patty Betita,** Model/Image Consultant

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# Gonzalez orders NBI to probe Erap's reported fund laundering

By Armand N. Nocum

ESTRADA

PELAEZ

GONZALEZ

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ yesterday ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to look into reports that ousted President Joseph Estrada could have laundered part of the "missing" P3.2 billion Jose Velarde account through a bank account under the name of a former beauty queen.

"I think the story is worth looking into, considering the amount involved. It seems to jibe with the (amount involved) in the plunder case at the Sandiganbayan," said Gonzalez, referring to the trial of Estrada who is accused of illegally amassing more than P4 billion from gambling payoffs and tobacco tax kickbacks.

Gonzalez added, however, that even if the laundered funds were proven to be part of the Velarde account, the alleged money laundering would not be included in the on-going plunder trial as the prosecution has already rested its case.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio confirmed this, but said prosecutors still have the rebuttal period to try to introduce the matter. Villa-Ignacio theorized that the P2.07 million allegedly laundered through the account ostensibly belonging to Joelle Marie Henson Pelaez, second runner up in the 1999 Binibining Pilipinas beauty contest, could be part of the Velarde account.

"The P3.2 billion Velarde account suddenly went zero at about the same time," Villa-Ignacio said of the alleged Velarde account that disappeared before the impeachment trial of Estrada started in 2000.

Estrada denied the allegations and said they were a ploy to divert the public's attention from the "strong defense" he was putting up at his trial.

Estrada told the INQUIRER that the allegations were part of a smear campaign against him as he and his lawyers wrap up his testimony, which he described as capable of shattering the credibility of Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, the government's star witness.

"I don't know anything about that story, not one bit of it," Estrada said from his Tanay, Rizal, estate where he is under house arrest.

Estrada said he remembers that the Pelaezes had approached him while he was President trying to supply the Philippine National Police with handcuffs but he referred them to Sen. Panfilo Lacson, then PNP chief.

Asked if he would file countercharges against Pelaez, Estrada replied, "We'll see."

A report in the Manila Standard quoted Pelaez, who is in the United States, as saying that the transactions, which involved money transfers and the acquisition and sale of bonds and stocks, were not hers but were carried out through a United Coconut Planters Bank account under her name. She said she has filed a P500-million lawsuit against those who used her name and forged her signature for the transactions.

"Let's see; there might be a paper trail leading to the plunder case or it could be an entirely different account. Whatever, it only proves what we're saying: they have a lot of money," Villa-Ignacio said of Estrada and his cronies.

In ordering NBI chief Nestor M. Mantaring to investigate the matter, Gonzalez pointed out that the alleged money-laundering "involved government funds and were traded by a government-sequestered bank."

"I am ordering you to investigate these allegations, starting with all those names mentioned in the article, in coordination with the Anti-Money Laundering Council and to submit your regular update on your investigation to this office," Gonzalez said.

"We can't just brush aside this story," Gonzalez said in an interview. "Pelaez divulged these details, it's a first-hand story," he said. Gonzalez said he would send his people to check the matter out in the US, but he said it would be unlikely that they would be inviting Pelaez over here to shed light on her revelations.

"I don't think that she'll say more if she's invited here," he said.

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LA MESA HOUSING ROW

# Senate asked to look into execs' houses

By TJ Burgonio

A MEMBER-ORGANIZATION OF the Save the La Mesa Dam Coalition wants a congressional panel to look into the construction of a housing project for executives of the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System (MWSS) in the La Mesa watershed.

A joint Senate and House panel, chaired by Sen. Pia Cayetano, starts its inquiry today into the project and another one for MWSS employees that was exposed earlier by the coalition and Bantay Kalikasan, ABS-CBN Foundation's environmental concerns arm. Both housing projects are seen as threatening Metro Manila's water supply which comes from the La Mesa reservoir.

"As part of the coalition, we want to know who approved the housing project and who are spending money for its construction," said Mar Canonigo, associate director of Sinag Bayan Foundation, in an interview.

"Thirdly, we want to know who own the mansion-like homes in the project," he said.

Canonigo said he toured the three-hectare MWSS executive village on May 5 with a Bantay Kalikasan staffer and found out that five out of 54 houses had been completed.

Sinag Bayan, an NGO on good governance, is part of the Save the La Mesa Dam Coalition that exposed the 58-hectare Supreme Court-approved housing project for some 1,411 MWSS employees.

Cayetano, chair of the Senate committee on environment and the bicameral oversight committee on clean water, said MWSS Administrator Orlando Hondrade would be asked to shed light on the subdivision for the executives.

Hondrade had been reported in the papers as the owner of one of the houses under construction.

A Commission on Audit resident auditor and the head of the Government Corporate Counsel also own houses in the village, Canonigo said he was told.

Cayetano said MWSS officials should explain why they had allowed construction of the executive village, "which is much closer to the watershed and is now almost ready for occupancy."

The complaint against the employee housing project, which has yet to get off the ground, was that it was too close to the reservoir.

Canonigo, who is appearing at today's inquiry as a resource person, revealed the existence of the executive village during a public meeting of the coalition last week.

Cayetano said today's inquiry will focus on the threat posed by the two housing projects to the 2,700-ha watershed.

"We should look into both housing projects in view of their potential threat to the watershed, regardless of whether the project will benefit ordinary employees or top officials," she said in a statement.

"The panel will attempt to determine if there is basis for the concern of environmentalists that waste water coming from the housing sites could contaminate water in the reservoir," she said.

58% AGREE

"The members of the opposition against Pres. Arroyo should start helping to improve the country and stop too much politics. "

OPINION ON THE STATEMENT:

"The members of the opposition against President Arroyo should start helping to improve the country and stop too much politics"

AGREE: 58%
UNDECIDED: 24%
DISAGREE: 15%

*Don't know and refused to answer not shown

First Quarter Social Weather Report March 8-14, 2006 National Survey

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# DepEd eyes ₱2B in savings

By Alcuin Papa

THE DEPARTMENT of Education hopes to save some P2 billion in maintenance and operating costs with the launch yesterday of National Schools Maintenance Week.

The project, dubbed Brigada Eskwela, aims to spruce up the public schools around the country using volunteer labor and donated materials in time for the opening of classes on June 5.

From yesterday up to Friday, teachers, parents, students and other members of the community will volunteer their time and materials to clean up and do minor repairs in the public schools in their areas.

Under the supervision of the school principals, the volunteers will paint, repair and clean the roofs, classrooms, footpaths, toilets, desks, chairs and surroundings of the public schools around the country.

DepEd officer in charge Fe Hidalgo yesterday led education officials in the formal launch of Brigada Eskwela at the Diosdado Macapagal Elementary School, formerly the Tatalon Elementary School, in Quezon City.

"Brigada Eskwela is *bayanihan* in action. Here we see the spirit of volunteerism very much alive among our school communities. This is an important value we should teach each and every Filipino child," Hidalgo said.

Hidalgo invited the public to participate in the program and contribute what they can to the schools in their localities.

# Childless couples to join Obando . . .

From page A1

she and her husband Erick have yet to be blessed with a child.

So today, Raymundo will join hundreds of childless couples in Obando's fertility rites to implore this town's patron saints for a child.

"I do not yet deserve a Mother's Day greeting because I have yet to bear a child. I wish Santa Clara would give me one," she said.

## Festivities

Starting today, Obando's streets will be filled with women and couples who will sway to the familiar tune, "Santa Clarang *pinung-pino*."

The celebration will go on for three days to mark the feasts of Santa Clara, San Pascual Baylon and the Virgen de Salambao.

Mary de Jesus, 50, of Baliuag town, said she would attend the fertility rites in thanksgiving.

She said she bore a son, now 12 years old, after almost 10 years of dancing and praying in Obando.

"I was the happiest woman when I learned that I was pregnant. It was a great feeling. My husband and I were so happy, we were in tears," she said.

De Jesus said her son, whom she named Claro (after Santa Clara), will be a high school freshman in June.

Mayor Zoilito Santiago said the song and dance steps of the Obando fertility rites will be taught in local schools so the youth would be aware of the rich spiritual heritage and culture of their town.

---

# Volunteer moms take care of special kids

From page A1

with the reality that her child is not like the others.

KMBK president Jean Gonzales recalls the day at the Philippine General Hospital the doctor confirmed that her son Paolo was autistic.

Autism is a developmental disability which affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3.

Earlier, Gonzales had been told by her husband's aunt from Canada—who had twins with autism—that Paolo exhibited similar symptoms.

When she found out that Paolo would not be like his siblings, what kept Gonzales going was the thought that her child was not alone, that there were others like him, and that he had a chance of blending in society.

"I thought, if other people could accept that their children were special, so could I. If I do not accept my own child, who will?" Gonzales says.

## Journey of love

Paolo's plight has since become a journey of love for Gonzales—a daily lesson on how to embrace people for who they are and help them be what they can be.

Eleven years later, the mother of six is not only raising and teaching Paolo. She has also extended the boundaries of her love to other special children and their parents who, after all these years, still have not been able to cope.

Every week, the KMBK gives free therapy to around 50 special children. The young ones get physical therapy as well as informal reading and writing sessions.

Every day, mothers from the KMBK go around the 11 barangays of Mandaluyong to pick up the special children and take them to the day care center.

**SPECIAL** interaction sessions: (left) Eliza Lorido and her 6-year-old son Jercy and Norma and her 11-year-old son Norman.

JOAN BONDOC

They start out as early as 8:30 a.m.; walking house-to-house because the women do not have money for the P12 tricycle ride or P7.50 jeepney fare.

## Ignored

The KMBK has a small fund, but it is for the snacks of the kids and the therapist-trainer from Reach Foundation, a nongovernment organization that trains volunteer mothers in therapy.

Most of the women barely have enough money for their own families.

Gonzales' husband, for example, is a parking valet who works three days a week with a take-home pay of P300 a day. Gonzales herself cannot work since she devotes her time to her six children and the KMBK's special wards.

The KMBK volunteers, however, forget their problems when they pick up the special children. When they arrive at their homes, they usually find the special child huddled in a corner, almost nonexistent to the other family members.

"Most parents focus on their normal children and tend to ignore the disabled one. It really makes me cry sometimes," Gonzales says.

## Love and acceptance

Marieta Cruz, whose 13-year-old son has cerebral palsy, is only too familiar with the ill-treatment received by special children. Her son, a fourth grader in a regular public school, has been called *pilay* (crippled) and *bading* (homosexual) because of how he walks.

Despite the taunts, Cruz knows her son is still more fortunate than others because he is loved and accepted by his family. Cruz herself diligently teaches him so he can catch up in school.

"Some people have told me not to send him to school because he would be useless anyway. Some are afraid to go near him because they think special kids could turn violent and hurt them," she says.

Of the volunteer moms, Cruz is known to be an enthusiastic and patient teacher. She revels at seeing special kids learn to hold pencils and memorize numbers and the alphabet.

## Little things

It's little things like this that make a difference for mothers like Norma Veruna, 39, who has spent the past 10 years attending to her 11-year-old son Norman.

The boy suffers from a still unknown developmental disorder that prevents him from speaking whole words. He lacks the liveliness of kids his age and spends his days just sitting or lying in bed.

Norma learned of KMBK through a neighbor and visited the day care center for the first time last week. She says she has always been the lone caregiver of Norman, feeding him, massaging him and responding to his cries.

While she does not yet know what to expect from the organization, she is positive that it would be good for her family. Her husband, a construction worker, can barely provide for their needs. It means a lot that Norman can avail himself of therapy and classes for free.

"Some parents eventually come to terms with the condition of their special children when they see how other people care for them. Sometimes, it's out of shame that they do not give as much attention—being the parents. But most of the time, it's because they see that the children are loved," Gonzales says. *With LJ Pasion*

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# Military, Reds linked to slays of 38 leftists

From page A1

"hasty generalization."

"We'd like to request them (the militants) to come out and give evidence or testimony," he added.

"What we would like to show is that military and paramilitary (units), even the police, had their share of suspected (men)."

## No conclusions yet

But Razon stressed his group had not come to any definite conclusion.

"These are suspicions ... and not outright indications that military or paramilitary (men) are involved," he said.

A review of the cases revealed some of the suspects were believed to be members of particular security units.

Razon said further investigation was needed to verify the data and that at this point, the task force could not conclude that the killings were "related (or) ... serialized."

Razon said the task force was also looking into the unsolved killings of media people, politicians and government employees and was thinking of offering rewards for information that would lead to the solution of the cases.

## Lack of witnesses

Reward systems had helped the police in the past and Razon hoped they would "entice" civilians into coming out with information.

He said many of the cases could not move forward for lack of witnesses and this was one of the key problems identified by the task force.

One case the task force had reviewed showed that the death of a Bayan Muna member was the result of a "legitimate" encounter between the NPA and government forces.

Razon said Nicanor de los Santos died when his group encountered Army soldiers on Dec. 8, 2001, in Antipolo City.

## Victims of purge

He cited other party-list members who the police said were killed as a result of a communist purge. They included a Bayan Muna member killed in May 2004, the police brief said.

According to the document, "unconfirmed reports disclosed that the victim has been a subject of numerous sightings of armed NPA, including Ka Roger Rosal, last year."

The list also included Bayan Muna coordinator Romeo Sanchez, who was killed during a March 2005 clash in Baguio City between the so-called reaffirmist and rejectionist factions within the communist movement.

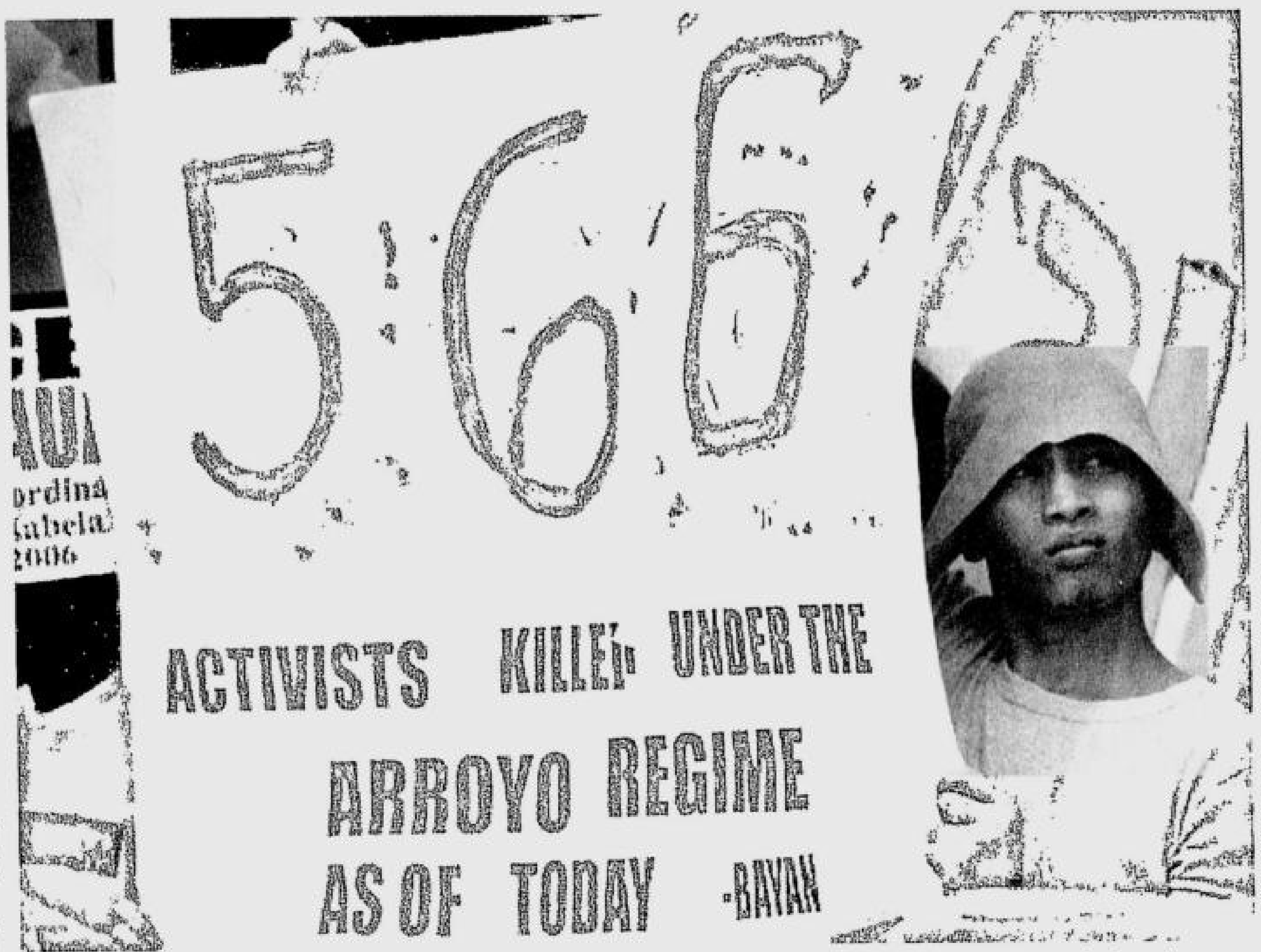
## Digging further

Razon said the task force would dig further to see if there was a connection between the rift within the communist movement and the killings.

"A lot of their members [previously] had been victims of these," he said, citing the purges in the communist movement during the 1980s.

The police brief did not cite the circumstances behind the 25 cases of killings supposedly involving military and paramilitary units.

Razon rejected speculation of a whitewash in the investigation of possible military involvement.



A MEMBER of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan displays the number of leftwing activists from different groups who have been killed since 2001 during a rally in front of St. Peter's Church in Quezon City. RAFFY LERMA

## No whitewash

"On the contrary, we will not put it there (in the brief) ... we will not mention any suspected military or paramilitary units (if the aim is to whitewash the investigation)," he said.

Razon said the task force would try to coordinate with the party-list groups to solve the cases.

If the intention is to whitewash, why would the police try to talk to these groups, he said.

Razon dismissed suggestions that the inclusion of the killings of newsmen and politicians in the work of the task force would divert focus from the killings of political activists.

The task force, he said, would simply "orchestrate and integrate" the efforts of different police units.

## Mostly from Bayan Muna

Investigators have taken the statements of two witnesses to the killing of Elena Mendiola, Bayan Muna-Cagayan Valley secretary general, and her partner, Ricardo Balauag, in Isabela last week, Razon said.

The National Bureau of Investigation in the region has completed artist's sketches of the gunmen.

Statistics released by the task force on the killings of party-list members since 2001 showed that 28 of them took place in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan).

The killings clearly targeted a group of activists, mainly those from Bayan Muna, which has three representatives in Congress, and Anakpawis, which has two congressmen.

Ninety-two incidents involved the murder of Bayan Muna members while 23 incidents involved the killing of Anakpawis members, the police data showed.

## Others targeted, too

In two incidents, members of Gabriela were targeted. In four others, the targets belonged to other militant groups.

Cases have been filed in court for 15 percent of the incidents while the rest are still under investigation.

Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela belong to the so-called Reaffirmists of the leftist movement which split up in the early 1990s.

Data from Bagong Alyansang Makabayan showed that 93 of its members had been killed since Ms Arroyo assumed power.

## 'Worst man-made disaster'

Quoting the human rights group Karapatan, Bayan said the "systematic" decimation of activists had claimed the lives of 566 people since 2001. These figures have been submitted to the United Nations, Bayan said.

"This is the single worst man-made disaster that has spanned five years and continues even to this day. The extent and magnitude of the killings show that there is a systematic national campaign to annihilate and decapitate legal organizations of the national democratic mass movement," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes.

Police data also showed that since 1986, there have been 69 killings of journalists. Thirteen people were murdered in 2004 and 10 last year.

# *CPP purge ongoing, says Puno*

**By Norman Bordadora**

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE has received fresh reports of an ongoing purge in the communist movement and this may have resulted in the deaths of some members of legal leftist organizations like Bayan Muna, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said yesterday.

Puno said a police task force looking into the unsolved killings of militant leaders had included this angle in its investigation because of information that the Communist Party of the Philippines may be cleansing its ranks of suspected traitors.

"These are fresh reports, not just historical data," he said.

Puno said the task force would also focus on other leads, such as the possible involvement of the military and of others with motives not connected to political ideology.

"If the investigation shows the involvement of members of the military, then they'd be appropriately charged," he said. "But before the investigation is finished, let us not make our conclusions."

"I leave it to the task force to make the proper announcement," Puno said.

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan expressed disgust over reports blaming the Left for the deaths of militant leaders.

"It is incredibly idiotic and malicious to blame so-called CPP purges for these deaths. It is patently ridiculous to deny the pattern in the killing of activists," said Renato Reyes Jr., Bayan secretary general.

"Bayan stands by its earlier pronouncement that the killings were the work of government-sponsored death squads," he said. *With reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Amy Rañola*

# GMA cuts tariff on crude oil imports

From page A1

three days before Congress resumed its session yesterday.

Tariff revisions through executive order are only allowed when Congress is in recess. Otherwise, adjustments in duties would require congressional action.

Malacañang chose to cut the oil tariff rather than suspend the 12-percent value-added tax (VAT) on oil because of the latter's bigger impact on revenue collections.

Foreign lenders also reacted negatively to the idea of a VAT suspension, warning that Manila's target to balance the national budget by 2008 could be undermined.

## No relief for the poor

Ms Arroyo's economic adviser, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, said cutting oil tariffs would hardly ease the impact of rising oil prices on the working class whose take-home pay had been reduced by last year's increase in taxes.

"The move to cut oil tariffs signals this administration's concern on the impact of rising oil prices. But this is not enough because it is inevitable that we should suspend the oil VAT till prices normalize," said Salceda.

He suggested that the oil tax be suspended until December or the oil VAT be reverted to an excise tax so that further oil price adjustments would not be charged the VAT.

## Capital imports

Ms Arroyo also signed EO 528 which would give duty-free status to capital equipment, spare parts and accessories imported by new and expanding enterprises registered with the Board of Investments.

At present, only BOI enterprises operating inside economic zones and freeports enjoy this privilege.

The capital equipment and spare parts eligible for zero tariffs should not have been manufactured locally (or not in sufficient quantity, if made here) and they should be "reasonably needed and used exclusively by enterprises."

## More competitive

Companies that avail themselves of this perk are barred from selling or transferring the equipment within five years from the date of importation or they will be asked to pay twice the amount of duty foregone.

"Importation of capital equipment is one of the major cost burdens of business enterprises in their start-up operations," Ms Arroyo said. "Allowing duty free importation will make the Philippines more competitive in attracting industries in the face of increasing competitive Asian markets for foreign direct investments."

## Balancing act

The move is expected to address complaints about the rising cost of doing business in the Philippines. Malacañang is hopeful that cutting businessmen's import costs would avert any price adjustments on their goods and services brought about by rising crude oil prices.

The country's economic managers have said that cutting the tariff on imported petroleum products from, say, 3 to 1 percent would slash pump prices by an average of 50 centavos a liter.

They believe that a tariff rate reduction would not result in any foregone revenues because the lost revenues from the tariff reduction would be offset by the higher duty collection resulting from the increase in oil prices.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran has said that while revenue collections would decrease by P2.5 billion for every one percentage point cut in tariff, revenues would also increase by P1 billion for every $1 increase in the price of Dubai crude.

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# DAR to use military, police against resisting landowners

From page A1

ad, another group aiding farmer beneficiaries, identified as hot spots the provinces of Iloilo, Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental and the Bondoc Peninsula, where the family of Domingo Reyes controls vast coconut plantations.

Masbate province, where landowners are using the exemption for cattle-grazing and livestock areas as an excuse to evade the CARP, and Davao del Norte, where the Floirendos are seeking exemption for thousands of hectares of banana plantations, will also be declared hot spots.

Davao-based peasant leader Enrico Cabanit, a retrenched worker in one of the Floirendo plantations, was gunned down last month allegedly for his campaign to have the Floirendo lands covered by CARP.

"They said they would do another Buenavista if they have to," Unorka national council member Evangeline Mendoza said, quoting the AFP and PNP representatives who attended the task force's meeting last week.

The DAR, backed by a helicopter and an armored personnel carrier from the AFP, conducted the first armed installation of farmers on a CARP land in 1998, allowing 57 families to occupy the 153 hectares of land awarded to them despite landowner opposition in Buenavista, Quezon.

## Move to assure farmers

Agrarian Secretary Nasser Pangandaman admitted in a press conference last week that the memorandum of agreement between the DAR and the PNP stating that the department could mobilize the police to assist in carrying out the CARP had not been implemented on the ground.

Cruz said that tapping the AFP and PNP to help in CARP implementation was also a way for the two agencies to assure the farmers of their support amid talks that some of the peasant killings were committed by the military or police hired by landowners.

"One way for you to clear your name is for you to be there," Cruz told representatives of the DND and PNP.

Most of the remaining lands to be covered by CARP are contentious areas where the landowners have goons and even APCs to prevent farmers and agrarian reform officers from entering their landholdings.

Mendoza cited the banana plantations of the Floirendos in Davao from which even DAR officials like Pangandaman, then undersecretary for Mindanao, were barred. They shared the fate of three other teams that tried to survey the area.

## 600,000 hectares targeted

Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Nestor Acosta recently cancelled an ocular inspection of the Floirendo-controlled Tagum Development Corp. lands because of the "advice" allegedly of its management that the DAR team would not be allowed entry if it came with farmers.

The department has to place 600,000 hectares more of private lands under CARP by 2008, the deadline for land acquisition and distribution set by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law.

# *New papal nuncio 'an old friend' of RP, says Lagdameo*

**By Christian V. Esguerra**

FILONI: 10 years in Manila

ARCHBISHOP FERnando Filoni, the Holy See's new ambassador to the Philippines, is no stranger to Filipinos, having spent 10 years in the country as counselor to two apostolic nuncios.

Archbishop Angel Lagdmeo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said yesterday that the new apostolic nuncio's familiarity with the Philippine situation would allow better collaboration with local bishops on different pastoral concerns. Filoni was a counselor at the nunciature on Taft Avenue in Manila from 1992 to 2001.

"In this sense, we are welcoming an old friend to our country," Lagdameo said in a statement.

"His 10 years of experience in this country will have made him intimately conversant both with the agonizing problems and with the hopes and dreams of the Filipinos," Fr. James Reuter, executive secretary of the National Office of Mass Media, said in another statement.

Filoni, 60, is scheduled to arrive at 3:25 p.m. today. He replaces Archbishop Antonio Franco, who has been assigned as as apostolic nuncio in Israel and apostolic delegate to Jerusalem and Palestine.

A pastor and a diplomat, Filoni joined the diplomatic service of the Holy See at age 36. He served in the apostolic nunciatures of Sri Lanka, Iraq, Brazil and in the Vatican Secretariat of State.

He holds a doctorate in philosophy and canon law and speaks fluent English, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

Considering Filoni's experience and credentials, Lagdameo expressed confidence that the new Vatican ambassador "will reflect and dialogue with the Philippine bishops on the pastoral and social concerns that today characterize our local church."

Filoni arrives at a time of serious social concerns highlighted by what Filipino Catholic bishops have been calling as "worsening poverty."

In an effort to encourage the faithful to be more engaged in addressing many social issues, the CBCP has declared 2006 as the "Year of Social Concerns," with the local hierarchy being more vocal not only on social issues but on political ones as well.

In a strongly worded pastoral statement last January, the CBCP traced the raging political turmoil to a lack of moral values in public life. "What clearly emerges is the continued and urgent need for renewal in the public life of our country," it said.

Faced with a local Church beginning to be seen as more engaged in political matters but coming from a clearly moral point of view, the new Vatican ambassador is expected to do a delicate balancing act.

An apostolic nuncio Filoni represents Pope Benedict XVI.

The former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is viewed in some quarters as someone averse to the idea of priests meddling with political affairs. But others believe this perception does not show a complete picture of Benedict, himself known as a defender of the weak and oppressed.

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# After 26 years, US restores diplomatic ties with Libya

WASHINGTON – The United States has decided to restore normal diplomatic relations with Libya for the first time in over a quarter century after taking Moammar Gadhafi's country off a US list of state sponsors of terrorism, Department of State officials said.

A formal announcement was expected Monday (Tuesday in Manila).

The move culminates a process that began three years ago when Tripoli surprised the world by agreeing to dismantle its nuclear weapons program.

## Since 1980

There have been no normal relations with Libya since 1980. The state department for several years listed Libya among nations the US government considered as official sponsors of terrorism.

Libya was held responsible for the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 in 1988, which claimed 270 lives, most of them American.

## Move away from terror

But Libya has made a decisive move away from terrorism in recent years, officials said.

The state department was going to announce that it will open an embassy in Libya, upgrading the current US liaison office in Tripoli, said a Department of State official.

"This is not a decision that we arrived out without carefully monitoring and assessing Libya's behavior," Assistant Secretary of State David Welch said.

Welch said the United States will soon upgrade its diplomatic office in Tripoli to a full embassy.

## 45-day comment period

It will also announce it intends to remove Libya from the list of countries the United States considers to be state sponsors of terrorism. That means that a 45-day public comment period will begin on Monday, after which Libya would be removed from the list. The official described the announcement on condition of anonymity because the official announcement had not yet been made.

## Assassination attempt

The establishment of normal relations may have come sooner were it not for allegations that Gadhafi's regime was behind an attempt on the life of Saudi's Arabia's King Adbullah when he was crown prince several years ago.

Hints that a US move was afoot were evident when the state department decided to summon family members of the victims of Pan Am 103 to Washington for a briefing next week on "US-Libyan relations."

## Substantial oil reserves

The administration's decision also comes at a time when it is attempting to shore up relations with major oil producers because of high prices and a shortage of supplies. Libya has substantial oil reserves.

Gadhafi was once known here as perhaps the most dangerous man in the Middle East. President Ronald Reagan ordered air attacks against Libya in 1981 and 1986, the latter because of suspected Libyan sponsorship of a terrorist attack at a West Berlin disco frequented by American soldiers. Two Americans died there.

## Model behavior

Since 2003, however, Libya has been held up as a model by the administration for the way aspiring nuclear weapons powers should behave.

The American attack on Iraq made Gadhafi wonder whether he would be next. In December 2003, he agreed to surrender his facilities for building weapons of mass destruction and agreed to allow them to be shipped to the United States for storage.

## Fully warranted

Rep. Tom Lantos, the ranking Democrat on the House international relations committee, said the administration's decisions were fully warranted.

"Libya has thoroughly altered its behavior by abolishing its program to develop weapons of mass destruction and ending its support for terrorism," Lantos said. *AP*

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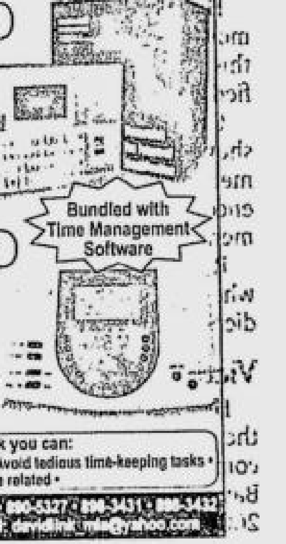

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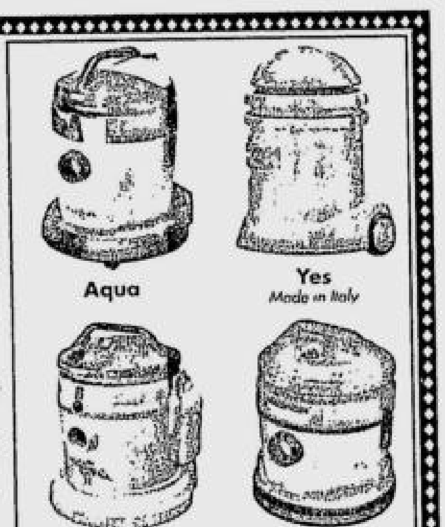

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## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 16, 2006
5th Week of Easter

| | |
|---|---|
| 1st Reading: | Acts 14:19-28 |
| Gospel: | John 14:27-31 |

Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace be with you; I give you my peace. Not as the world gives peace do I give it to you. Do not be troubled; do not be afraid. You heard me say: 'I am going away, but I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

"I have told you this now before it takes place, so that when it does happen you may believe. It is very little what I may still tell you, for the ruler of this world is at hand, although there is nothing in me that he can claim. But see, the world must know that I love the Father and that I do what the Father has taught me to do."

**Commentary**

*The persecution continues, with Paul being stoned and dragged outside the city by his friends. But he comes again to preach. They set up churches—encouraging them and telling them that they will know persecution—and then move on, allowing the Spirit to build the Church after they have merely opened the door. Jesus gives the gift of Peace, his own Spirit, power and presence to abide with them, no matter their distress and trials. That Spirit remains with us still. How do we express that peace today in our Church?*

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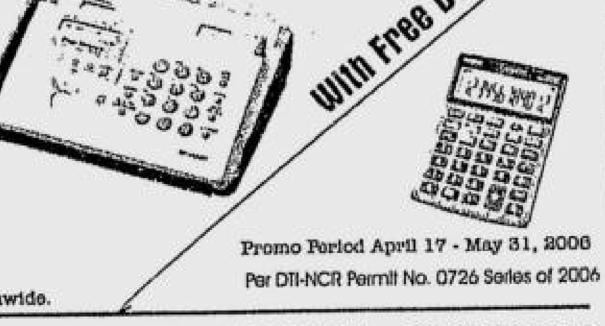

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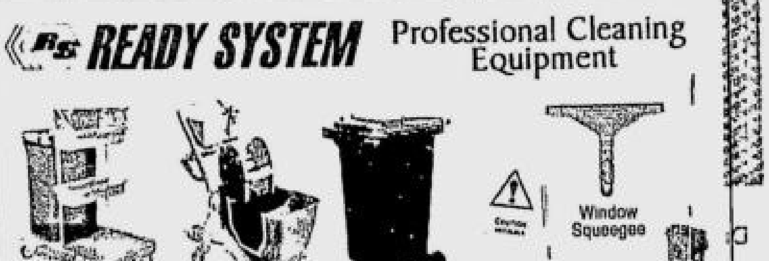

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# Gov't to save ₱5B if Senate is abolished, says Santiago

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO yesterday said the government could save more than P5 billion if the Senate were abolished in a unicameral parliamentary system.

The administration senator said if the upper chamber was abolished by July, the government could save over P1 billion a year up to 2010 when the term of 12 senators elected in 2004 is due to expire.

Santiago has said the Senate will cease to exist by July if the Supreme Court rules on the House resolution calling for a constituent assembly with the two chambers voting as one instead of separately.

"Only the Supreme Court has the sole and exclusive power to decide whether we can have Charter change and abolish the Senate," Santiago said. "By itself, the Senate has no power to veto a House resolution calling for a constituent assembly."

## Personally crushed

She said she was "personally crushed that the dialogue on Charter change seems to be driven by the presidential ambitions for the 2010 elections on the part of certain senators."

If the senators could not "rise above personal greed for power," she said she would rather vote for a parliamentary system of government.

Santiago said the Senate might as well be abolished because it was not "simon pure" anyway. Senatorial candidates in 2004 who were at the tailend of surveys suddenly became topnotchers, she pointed out.

"If Senate elections do not truly reflect the people's will, let us abolish the Senate and move up in our political evolution," she said.

## Downgrade to MP

"That can only be explained either by money or by magic. So how can certain senators adopt a moral stance with respect to President Macapagal-Arroyo's election?" she said.

Santiago said she would participate in a constituent assembly and was prepared to "be downgraded to an ordinary MP (member of parliament)."

She said some senators were "licking their forefingers" and were planning to support Charter change if they would be given the chance to run for Prime Minister under the new form of government.

# Senators to oppose Con-ass bid, says Drilon

SENATORS (from left) Manny Villar, Ralph Recto, Joker Arroyo, Juan Ponce Enrile and Francis Pangilinan attend the formal opening of the Senate's regular session.

ROGER MARGALLO

From page A1

tive Ledac," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement. He later told reporters that the meeting would be "fruitful."

Bunye said that among Malacañang's priority measures were the much-delayed 2006 national budget, the antiterror bill, tax exemption for minimum wage earners, bio-ethanol bill and the antismuggling bill.

The President's political adviser, Gabriel Claudio, said a separate presentation on Charter change would be made in today's meeting.

· He said the discussion "will be on whether both chambers can get together and jointly push for the constituent assembly as a mode to tackle the Charter change proposals.'"

## Palace optimistic

Claudio said the Palace "could also not ignore the fact that the House considers the constituent assembly its top priority, especially after having passed many of the administration's urgent legislative measures."

He said he was hopeful that "obstacles to a collaborative effort of the House and the Senate in pushing for constitutional reforms" would be overcome.

Drilon said 22 of the 23 senators signed a resolution in March opposing the House resolution that the two chambers vote as one instead of separately when amending the Constitution using the Con-ass mode. Only Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. was unable to sign because he was on sick leave.

## Senate nod essential

Drilon said he would present the resolution in the Ledac meeting. If the House resolution is taken up by the Supreme Court, Drilon said the Senate as an institution would also fight for its position.

"I am confident that the position of the Senate will be sustained by the Supreme Court," he said.

Drilon said that just to convene the Con-ass would require the concurrence of the Senate. He said the House resolution calling for the Con-ass was sent to the Senate in December last year, but it was still pending before its committee on constitutional amendments.

Drilon said the fact that the House filed a concurrent resolution and sent it to the Senate meant that the House recognized the need for Senate concurrence before it could validly convene a constituent assembly.

He said any constituent assembly without the Senate's concurrence would be an "exercise in futility."

Drilon will hold the senators to their signatures even if Senators Santiago, Edgardo Angara and Manuel "Lito" Lapid were to participate in an assembly.

He warned the three senators would be attending the assembly "in their personal capacity" and they would not be representing the Senate.

## Santiago's prediction

Other senators expectedly dismissed Santiago's prediction of the Senate's abolition by July.

"No, I don't see it. I'm even happy to say that … (if) the railroading of Cha-cha is not done yet by August this year, I'll make a bet that even the administration will start preparing for its senatorial lineup for 2007," said Sen. Ralph Recto.

Sen. Richard Gordon said: "JDV (Speaker Jose de Venecia) must be fretting because Miriam would be the prime minister."

But Gordon said Santiago's statement was conditional and that she probably knew that the Supreme Court would uphold the Senate position.

Angara said he was for a constituent assembly but only if the Senate and the House voted separately.

"We should let the Supreme Court decide that because my own reading is that the Constitution contemplates voting separately, not voting as one. If the Supreme Court says voting can be as one, then we will abide by it," Angara said.

## Timetable 'too tight'

He said Santiago's July timetable was "too tight" but added that it would be possible if the Senate and House leaders reached a consensus to sit as a constituent assembly.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero yesterday said Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino would attend the Ledac meeting but "only to listen."

He said the only bill on the agenda that the House opposition agreed with was the proposal to remove the withholding tax on the income of minimum-wage earners.

# Senate presidency still anybody's game—Nene

From page A1

the opposition bloc led by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr.

Drilon declared that he would honor his power-sharing agreement with Villar, who himself said he would start soliciting the signatures of 13 senators in his bid to become the Senate's next leader in July.

Amid all this, the seven-man minority bloc led by Pimentel would not merely cool its heels, but closely watch the "developments" on the Senate leadership revamp in the run-up to the opening of the third regular session on July 24.

"We are watching the developments carefully. For all you know, the minority might become the majority. Who knows, it's anybody's game at this point," Pimentel said in a press briefing.

"When the opportunity arises, the minority will strike, whatever that may be. So for the moment, what we're saying is that there's no group that can alter the status quo."

Apart from Pimentel, the group consists of Senators Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, Serge Osmeña III, Jamby Madrigal, Alfredo Lim, Jinggoy Estrada and his mother, Luisa "Loi" Ejercito.

Of all the groups in the chamber, Pimentel's bloc has the highest number of votes.

## No revamp

And despite speculations of a Senate revamp in yesterday's resumption of session, Drilon kept his post. Not one senator challenged his leadership and Drilon presided not just over the session but at a caucus of all senators to set the Senate's legislative agenda up to the adjournment of session on June 9.

In a briefing yesterday, Drilon said he would honor his gentleman's agreement to turn over the Senate presidency to Villar in July.

He also said he would sign any resolution that Villar would pass around to declare the Senate presidency vacant at the opening of the third regular session in late July.

Villar earlier told the INQUIRER that he expected Drilon to honor their agreement of July 2004. Drilon had said he would, but he added a new caveat—that Villar must secure the votes of the majority.

"Under our rules and as shown by tradition, as in all leadership changes in the Philippine Senate, the incoming Senate president will have to carry the mandate and support of 13 senators expressed through a signed resolution. I will sign that resolution," Drilon said.

## Campaign for Villar?

Drilon, however, would not commit the votes of the other senators who concurred with their 2004 agreement. He also would not say if he would campaign for Villar.

When asked if Villar needed to get 11 senators, Drilon said yes.

A majority of 13 is needed to elect the Senate president, but by tradition, Drilon is expected to vote for Villar.

Other senators seemed to echo Drilon's position.

Villar, for his part, said he would go out of his way to convince his colleagues in the chamber to support him in his bid. "Of course, I'll talk to them one by one," he told reporters.

## Counting votes

Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Juan Ponce Enrile, Richard Gordon and Manuel "Mar" Roxas II had said they were not bound by the pact, fueling speculations this would be challenged soon.

In his view, administration Sen. Ralph Recto said that the Senate presidency, if it ever came to a vote at the opening of the third regular session in late July, was still a toss-up between Drilon and Villar.

"Right now, Villar has 10 votes. If Drilon abides by the agreement, that's 11 votes," he said in an interview, but declined to name names. "And I think it's easy to get the two extra votes."

Villar and Recto belong to the so-called "Wednesday Group," which includes Senate Majority Leader Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan and Sen. Joker Arroyo.

## Kiko will honor it

Pangilinan said he had brokered the term-sharing agreement in 2004 between Drilon and Villar and said he would honor it.

"You'll have to ask the other senators about their vote. My position is that I brokered the agreement in 2004 so I will honor it," he said.

But he said Villar's election would depend on the senators.

"The decision to have a new Senate president is a decision of the chamber. We will go through it based on our rules," Pangilinan said.

Incidentally, Pangilinan is also a member of the Liberal Party bloc in the chamber, which includes party president Drilon, Roxas and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier said he would honor the agreement but said he did not know whether the others would.

"That's a question mark. There was an agreement before but I don't know if there are others who are changing their position," Flavier said.

Villar said he did not mind if he had to solicit the support of his colleagues despite their earlier agreement that he would take over by July, when the third session of the 13th Congress opens.

"That is OK. It's important that each senator will be given a right to vote. It's not a problem to me," Villar said.

## Minority report

Pimentel, however, said that even if the groups of Drilon and Villar coalesced, they would still fall short of the 13 votes needed to wrest control of the Senate presidency.

"They would still lack the necessary votes to effect a change in leadership. Unfortunately, if you follow the constitutional provision, you need 13 votes. Nobody has 13 votes at this point," he said.

He had earlier said that Drilon could count on five votes, and Villar, four.

Pimentel said he doubted that Drilon's party mates would go along with him in supporting Villar.

"He said yes, but that is a personal commitment of his. I'm not too sure if he brings with him the group of senators who are identified with him," he said.

Pimentel hinted that his group would not readily support Villar on the mere say-so of one senator.

"There are things that have to be decided like the interest of the individual senators, the interest of our group on specific issues," he said.

But he added: "Talking about possibilities, the possibility is that the status quo will be retained because you need 13 votes to maintain the status quo."

# Peso back to 52-level vs US dollar

From page A1

reckoned that since the peso had failed to break into the 50-level against the greenback, they might as well build their dollar reserves at the present exchange rate before the US currency strengthened further due to prospects of rising interest rates in the United States.

He also noted that dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers, which reached an eight-year high of $1 billion in March, were beginning to thin out. Most of the OFW remittances in March and April were for school fees and other expenses for the opening of classes in June.

"Remittances from overseas Filipino workers had poured in much earlier, so there's not so much [to offset outflows with] at this time," Ayes said.

He also attributed the peso's weakening to the demand for the US currency from foreign investors believed to be associated with the selldown in local stocks and bonds.

## Stronger dollar

These investors were willing to pay P52.30 to P52.40 for a US dollar in offshore markets, exerting downward pressure on the peso that was priced as much as 25 centavos higher against the greenback at the Philippine Dealing System.

Falling stock markets across Asia on Monday weighed not only on the peso but other regional currencies as well.

Traders said the peso slide early Monday spurred the profit-taking in the Philippine stock market. Local stocks yesterday plunged as investors, taking their cue from the peso's retreat against the US dollar, pocketed gains from the stock market's advance last week to its highest in nearly seven years.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 79.47 points, or 3.2 percent, to close at 2,438.73. On Friday it lost 32.59 points to finish at 2,518.20. *(See related story in Business, Page B1.)*

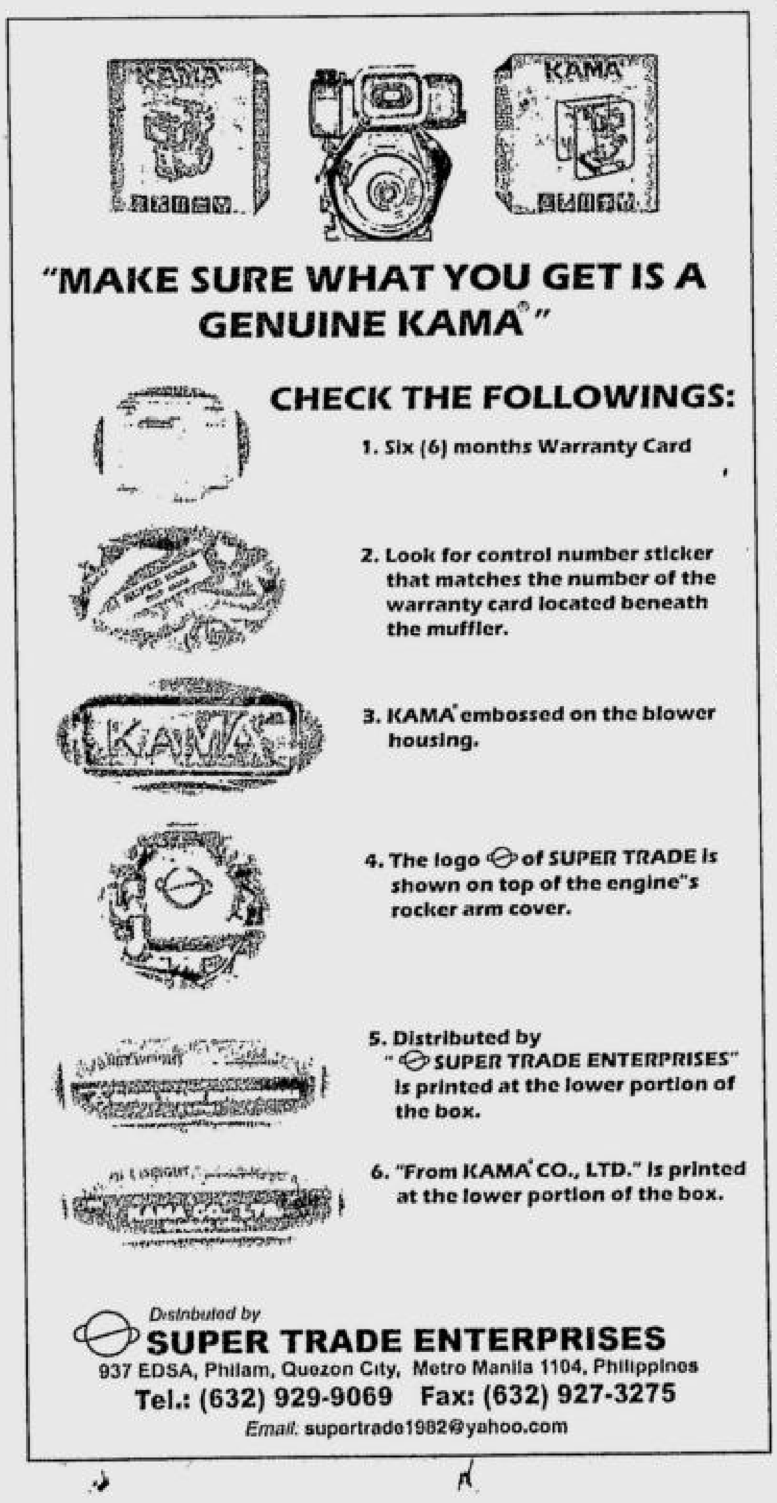
"It's due to corporate demand and foreign banks' lightening up their positions," Jonathan Ravelas, chief market strategist at Banco de Oro Universal Bank, said of the peso's depreciation.

Ayes said a stronger dollar in offshore markets could further weaken the peso at the Philippine Dealing System in the coming days.

But he stressed that the peso's depreciation had been driven by external forces and had nothing to do with any concern on the Philippine political or economic fronts.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. recently said local interest rates based on the benchmark Treasury bill had fallen "too low" and must bottom out to encourage peso-denominated savings.

Tetangco explained that if the narrow difference between Philippine and US interest rates persisted, this would encourage people to save in dollar accounts or put their money in dollar-denominated instruments.



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# RP seamen to get biometric ID cards soon

**By Jerome Aning**

FILIPINO SEAMEN WILL SOON HAVE THEIR biometric seafarer identity card to allow for easier seaport exit and entry in various parts of the world.

The ID system would be the first in Asia, Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said, adding that International Labor Organization last year recommended the use of a biometric ID system for seafarers.

"The advantage is Filipino seafarers would be accepted in many shores and their leaving their ships would be least inconvenient for them," he told reporters.

The country's 250,000 seafarers, the biggest number in the world, will receive the biometric ID free of charge, said Imson.

The IDs will be renewed every five years.

According to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, the number of Filipino sailors deployed overseas is expected to increase by some 25,000 this year, bringing to 272,751 the total number of Philippine mariners on foreign ocean-going vessels.

Partly on account of the increased deployment, TUCP general secretary Ernesto Herrera yesterday said remittances by Filipino sailors are expected to grow by US$250 million or 15 percent, to US$1.92 billion this year.

This would account for almost 17 percent of the projected US$11.8 billion that would be sent home this year by all Filipino workers abroad, the former senator said.

Last year, Herrera said, the sailors' remittances made up 15 percent of the US$10.7 billion that all foreign-based Filipino workers-sent home.

Herrera said the money remitted by Filipino sailors has grown by $580 million or 53 percent over the last five years, from $1.09 billion in 2001 to $1.67 billion in 2005.

Over the same period, he said the number of Filipino sailors abroad increased by 20 percent or 42,800, from the 204,951 in 2001 to 247,751 in 2005.

"The demand for Filipino sailors is being buoyed in a big way by brisk global trade, which in turn is being driven by the rapidly growing economies of China, India, Russia, Brazil, and to a certain extent, by the recovering Japanese economy," Herrera said.

"There has been a tremendous surge in all kinds of commodity shipments to China, from industrial metals and chemicals, to rice, crude oil and coal," he added.

### KNIFE DUEL IN THE HIGH SEAS

# Foreigners witness bloody Queen Mary fight

**By Volt Contreras**

SEVERAL CREW MEMBERS OF THE LUXURY liner Queen Mary II witnessed last week's killing of a Filipino crew man allegedly by his compatriot, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

The crew members—a mix of foreign and Filipino personnel—are expected to give British police first-hand accounts of the incident which occurred while the ship was en route to Norway on the afternoon of May 12.

Considered the world's largest, tallest and longest ocean liner, the QMII was still at sea completing its scheduled cruise as of yesterday, the DFA said. The ship can carry up to 2,620 passengers and is maintained by a crew of 1,253.

There were no passengers around when a fatal "fight" broke out between the two Filipinos at the rest and recreation area below deck, the agency reported.

The victim, described as 40-year-old, died of serious head injuries while being airlifted to a hospital in the coastal town of Groeningen, The Netherlands. The 49-year-old suspect has been detained by the ship captain and will be "formally arrested" when the luxury liner docks at her home port in Southampton, England, on May 17.

The DFA withheld the names of the two Filipinos at the request of Gallon Cessford, the investigating officer from Hampshire police, and pending notification of the families by the ship owner Cunard Lines in coordination with the Philippine Embassy in London.

A DFA official, who requested that he not be named, conceded that the incident may tarnish the Filipino seafarers' reputation abroad. "It doesn't bode well for the image of our seafarers," said the official, who is privy to case updates coming from London.

In his many years of dealing with cases of slain overseas Filipino workers, the official said, "when a knife was used, very often our suspicions would prove correct that it was another OFW who did it."

He provided no explanation for this "pattern" except to surmise that a knife is the most easily obtainable weapon in a foreign country.

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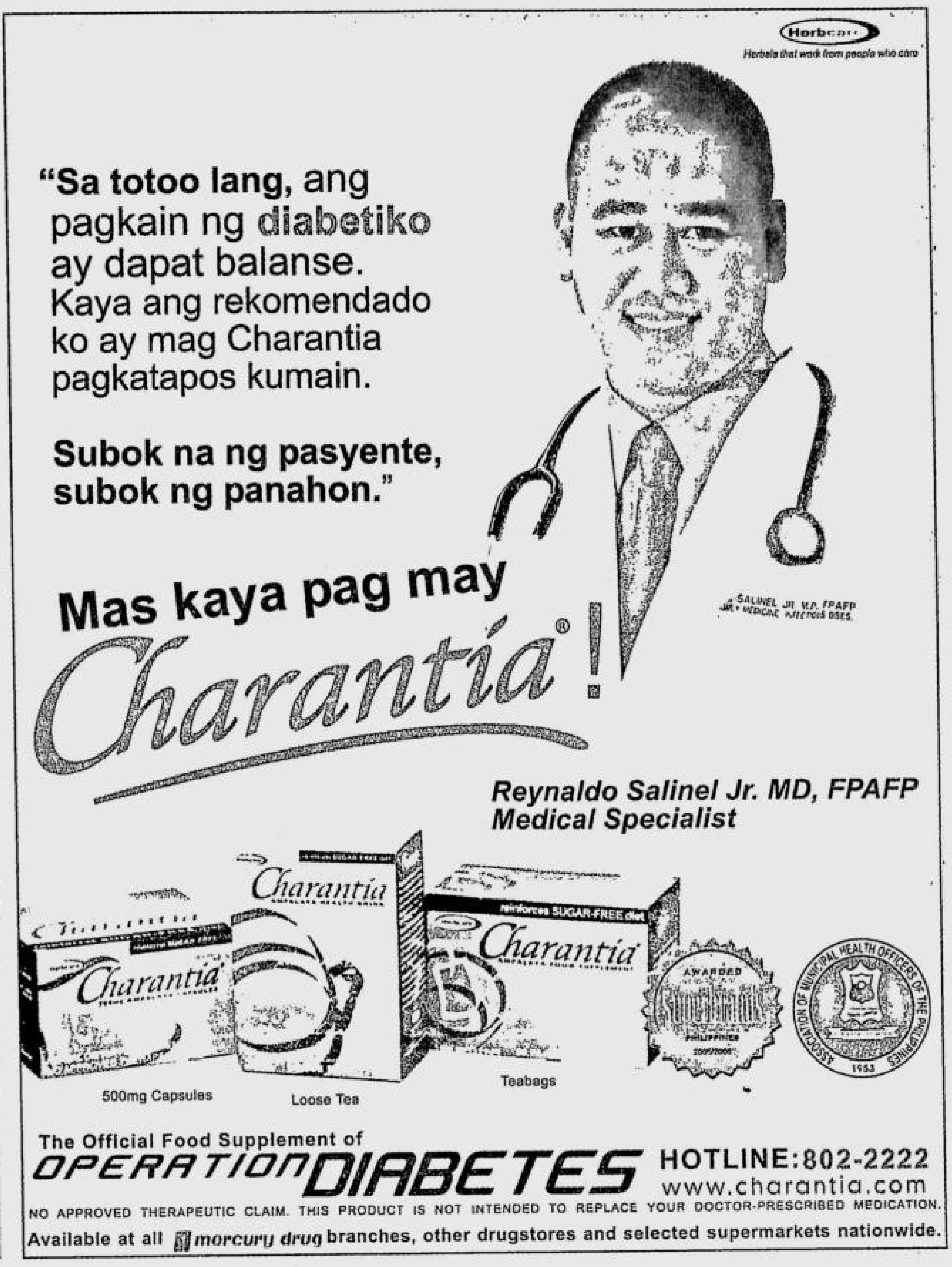
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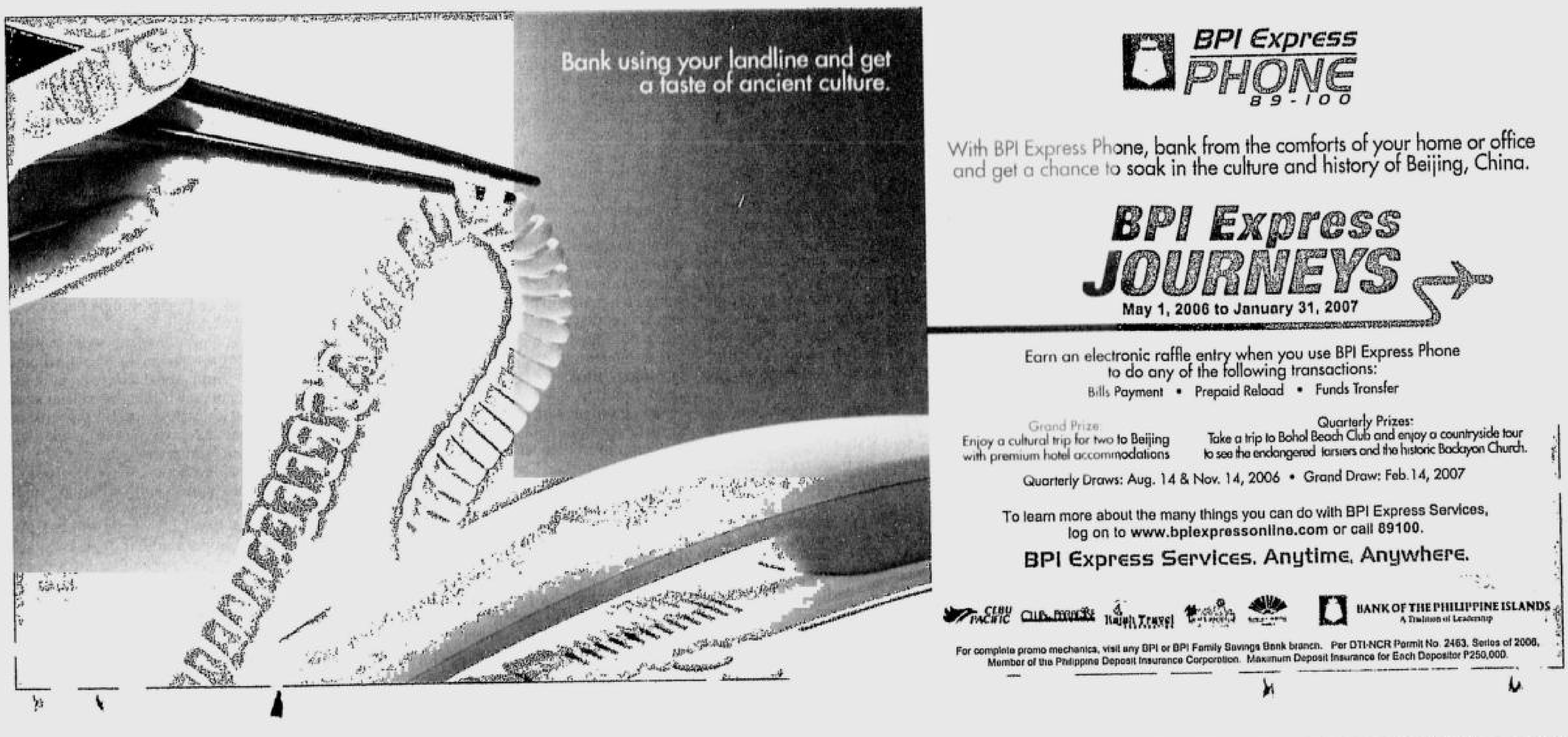
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# OPINION

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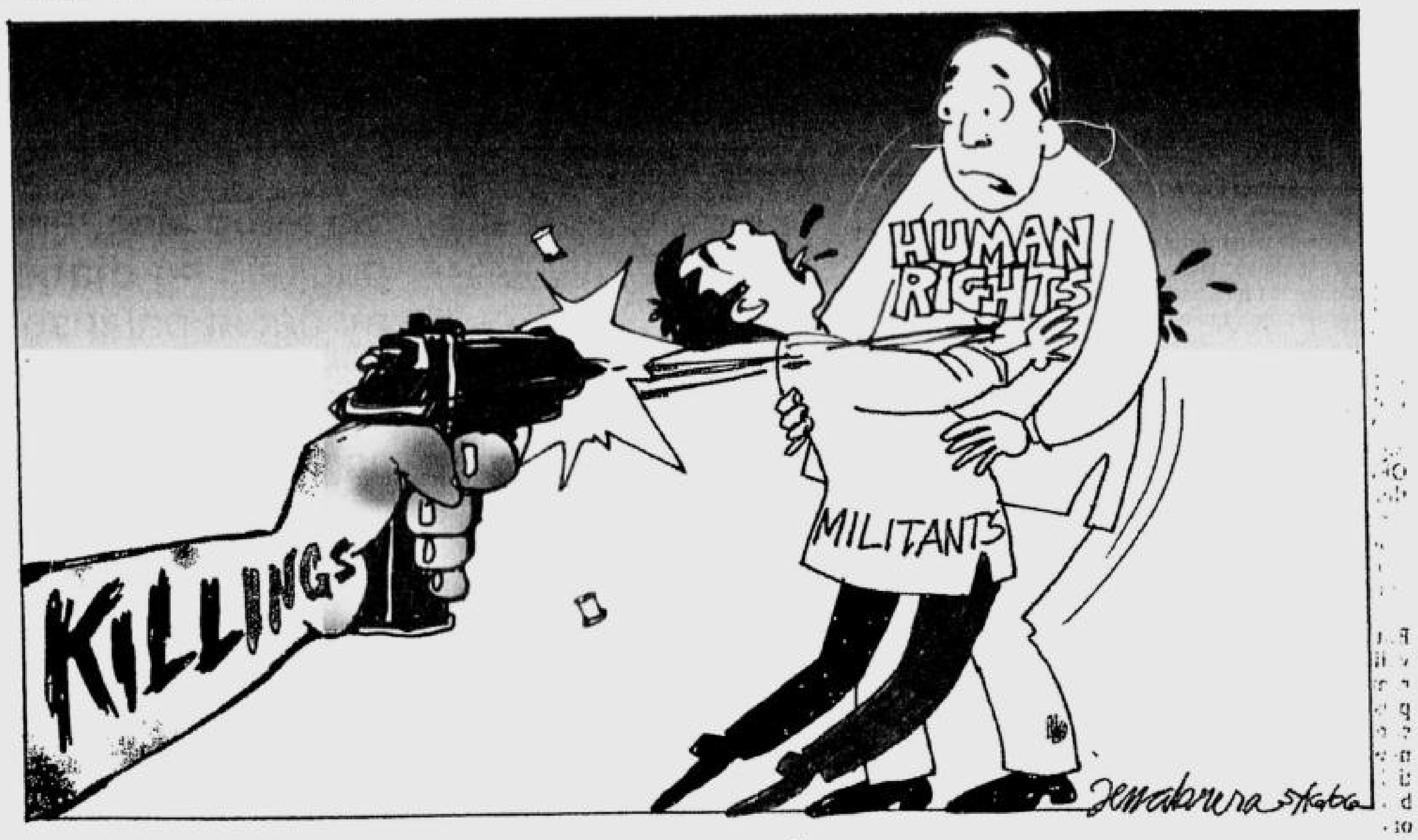

# A dismal record

**EDITORIAL**

NOT A FEW ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS viewed with irony and sarcasm the news last week that the UN General Assembly had elected Cuba, China and Saudi Arabia to the new Human Rights Council. Voting by secret ballot, the UN General Assembly also elected Russia, Tunisia and the Philippines to the 47-member council.

Cuba, China and Saudi Arabia are widely known to be notorious abusers of human rights. Russia and Tunisia are two other countries whose records have been criticized by human rights groups. While Ambassador to the UN Lauro Baja Jr. hailed the Philippines' election to the Human Rights Council as "another remarkable success," we doubt very much whether our human rights record in the past two or three years is something to be proud of. Here is the record:

In 2005, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines documented the following cases of human rights violations: 37 cases of illegal arrest and detention, with 88 victims; 15 cases of torture, 32 victims; 1 displacement, 42 families; 13 harassment cases, 918 persons, 940 families, 9 barangays and one organization; 8 "salvagings" (extrajudicial killings), 8 persons; 2 cases of frustrated killings, 3 persons; 3 massacres, 32 killed and 13 wounded; 1 frustrated massacre, 1 killed, 1 wounded; 4 forced evacuations, 900 persons and 960 families; 3 illegal demolitions, 20,300 persons and 100 families; 5 violent dispersals of protest, 586 persons; and 5 cases of disappearance, 14 persons.

From 2001 to 2005, Task Force Detainees said, 55 perpetrators of human rights violations came from the Philippine Army, 22 from the Philippine National Police and 12 from "Intelligence."

In its 2004 annual report, Amnesty International said military and police forces used torture and ill treatment to extract confessions or information from scores of suspects during the year. The London-based group also took note of summary killings, arbitrary arrests, disappearances and torture of suspected communist rebels and members of legal left-wing organizations.

The US State Department, in a country report released last March 8, said that the Philippine government generally respected the human rights of its citizens. It added, however, that "pervasive weakness in the rule of law, official impunity and the wide disparity between rich and poor contributed to cynicism about official justice. " The report said the Philippine Commission on Human Rights described the Philippine National Police as "the worst abuser of human rights." It is indeed ironic that the government agency that is entrusted with enforcing the laws and protecting the rights of citizens is one of the first to violate and abuse their human rights.

The US State Department made particular mention of the following human rights problems: extrajudicial killings by the security services, and political killings, including killings of journalists; disappearances; physical and psychological abuse of suspects and detainees; and arbitrary arrest and detention.

The US State Department said, "The United States and other free nations have a duty to defend human rights and help spread democracy's blessings." This exhortation should be especially addressed to the Arroyo administration which, up to now, has apparently tolerated, if not actually encouraged by its indifference, the commission of human rights abuses.

All human rights abuses are repugnant to everyone's sense of civility and sense of justice, but because of their seriousness, we must particularly call the attention of the administration to the unabated extrajudicial killings of leftist activists and the slayings of journalists. To date, 123 leftist activists had been killed during the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Of these, 93 were Bayan Muna members. Since 1986, 76 journalists have been killed, and in most of these cases, the masterminds have not been brought to justice.

The US State Department said that "human rights and democracy are closely linked, and both are essential to long-term stability and security."

Let the Arroyo administration take note of this observation, and make a greater effort to guarantee and protect the human rights of all the people against all violators, including the members of its security forces. It should also look seriously into allegations of human rights violations and not just issue statements condemning them. There can be no long-term stability, security and peace unless the human rights of all the people are respected and protected.

# Bogus prophecy

**VIEWPOINT**

*Juan L. Mercado*

IT'S ONLY 76 DAYS BEFORE—NO, NOT Christmas. It's two and a half months before Speaker Jose de Venecia's "prophecy" is to be fulfilled.

By end of July, De Venecia predicted either a bulldozed constituent assembly or "people's initiative" will have: (a) scrapped the 1987 Constitution; (b) abolished the Senate; (c) run a nationwide plebiscite overseen by an incorrigible Commission on Elections; and (d) strapped us into a still-to-be-defined parliamentary system. "A land of milk and honey" will then be around the corner, we're told.

Could this be what former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew called, in his memoirs on the Philippines, the "missing gel"? It'd enable a talented, diligent but fractious people to finally get their act together.

Then, why are many passengers scrambling off the Charter-change express before it careens into the terminal, even as President Macapagal-Arroyo leans on the throttle?

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, for one, has yanked the "stop" cord. "The bishops were alarmed at the continuing and deceptive campaign to gather signatures, under a people's initiative," the CBCP president, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, said.

Catholic social action centers nationwide reported the *pirma* campaign lacked adequate information and discussion, added the low-key CBCP vice president, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, SJ. It certainly was "not initiated by the people."

Most congressmen and assorted officials couldn't care less. They're staying on board. After all, one of its transitory provisions would scupper the next elections—and stretch their terms for three hassle-free years.

Thus, De Venecia's salivating legion won't enact the needed enabling law for a people's initiative. Nor will they wait for the Supreme Court to rule if the two houses of Congress must vote separately on constitutional changes. If 195 representatives sign on, the time is ripe.

"It's *hinog sa pilit*," says lecturer Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano. "Anything forced to ripen before its time—pineapple or politics—turns distasteful and bitter."

A frenzied administration, using government machinery and funds, seeks to make *hinog sa pilit* through people's initiative. "(This) shows the move is not from the people but from government ..... (and) kills creative initiatives people may have," Feliciano writes.

"I hate being manipulated by my own government," she adds. "I cannot find any valid reason that changing the Constitution now will make life better. What needs changing is the people holding power at present."

A "real people's initiative" would be one of sustained civil disobedience, Feliciano says. Not paying your taxes, OFWs withholding their remittances, mass absences, etc. "I greatly wonder how it would be."

What's needed is not Charter change but a new culture frame, writes the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture's Melba Padilla Maggay. Otherwise, constitutional tinkering will only end up with "just a piece of paper that can be thrown aside when found to be technically inconvenient by those in power."

Fr. Leonardo Mercado, SVD, agrees in his new book, "Political and Legal Philosophies: Western, Eastern and Filipino." He writes: "We must change the paradigm of our government from the rule of law to the rule of virtue which, in Filipino, is called of *pamahalaan*."

The Philippines has the façade of democratic government. But the reality, on the ground, is an intricate network of ever-shifting alliances based on patronage and clan loyalties. Contrivances like "people's initiative" reflect the onslaught of personal interests against the soft underbelly of formal systems. It is holding on to power at any cost.

Corruption has metastasized throughout society as a result, Mercado writes. There is a deepening mistrust of institutions. This erosion stems from the lack of a positive experience with institutions, whether Congress or Comelec.

This is the context wherein De Venecia's "prophecy" is playing out.

Rule of law is a major factor in growth and stability, Maggay notes. It emerged from centuries of struggle against despotic monarchies. It built systems, buttressed by culture, that kept faith with social contracts and sustained a just system of reward and punishment, enabling a society to flourish.

Blind copying of Western models results in gridlock. "In Asian political and legal philosophies—be it law as *dharma*, as *li*, as *torah* or as *shariah*—political agenda rests upon self-discipline and strives toward solidarity," Mercado writes.

Instead of constitutional tinkering for the political survival of elites, Maggay and Mercado stress the greater need for a common frame for what Filipinos stand for. Constitutions only put down on paper the moral consensus that a community has arrived at.

The next 76 days will show whether this was a bogus prophecy. Or will the end of July see a nightmare: a force-fed constitution would install, in a sham parliament, unelected representatives who, for the next three years, would further impoverish a nation sedated by entertainment.

What a measly epitaph that'd make for us: "They saw it coming. But they neither had the wit nor grit to resist the plunder of their children's futures."

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# Gods and monsters

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

FRANKLY, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY anyone, devout Christian or not, would object violently to a movie like "The Da Vinci Code." My reason for this is not that the thing is just pulp fiction, as its distributors rather anxiously propose. I'm not one to underestimate the power of pulp fiction—some have more impact than others.

At the very least my reason for it is that it is not the same as the Danish cartoons that depicted Mohammed as a terrorist or as the fountainhead of it. That truly was objectionable and had no place in a civilized world. Maybe freedom of the press can be extended to the extreme in defense of it. But it is crass and low-minded. The parallel is a redneck publication in the American South depicting Martin Luther King as urging blacks to murder white folk and rape their women. The freedom of the press is not the freedom to spread racial or religious prejudice.

"The Da Vinci Code" does nothing of the kind. It merely depicts Jesus Christ as no more divine than you or I, something the Muslims for one believe, relegating him to a minor prophet beside Mohammed. Christ's ascent to divinity, the movie or book says, owes entirely to Constantine who found it the key to turning Christianity into a state religion. That might offend many Christians, but that is covered by freedom of thought, if not of the press. Christians are free to debate the point and do not lack the venue for it.

At the very most, my reason for decrying the persecution of "The Da Vinci Code" in some parts of Christendom is that it is by no means the most subversive thought to have been raised against Christianity and it certainly won't be the last.

The brilliant scholar Joseph Campbell, who has devoted his entire life to studying the world's myths and written tomes on the subject, shows in "Creative Mythology: The Masks of God" that one of the earliest, and deeply subversive, challenges to Christian thought, at least as codified in the 12th century, was unbounded secular love. Before that, the Christian cosmology revolved only around two things: belief in the Virgin Mary as intercessor to heaven and in Hell as the ultimate punishment for those who strayed from the fold. This was a time when heretics were being ferreted out by the Inquisition and burned at the stake.

Today, the story of Tristan and Isolde (which by the way has also been turned into a movie, though a badly made one, if the critics are to be believed) would seem like the tamest thing in the world, a variation of Romeo and Juliet. Yet during the time it appeared, it was subversive in the extreme, not just flouting the sacredness of marriage (which gave the husband property rights over his wife, legitimizing among other things the chastity belt) but proposing a world that lay beyond (literally) heaven and hell, Church and State, which was the world of love between a man and a woman. The subversion was far subtler than Dan Brown's direct questioning of Christian tenets, but it was far more forceful, penetrating as it did the heart of the mythology, the deepest recesses of the unconscious mind.

Yet another earth-shaking challenge to Christianity came much later, this time from the camp of science, in the form of Darwin's theory of evolution. There's a very interesting movie too that dramatizes it, which is "Inherit the Wind." It was originally a play written by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee based on the 1925 Scopes trial in the United States to determine whether evolution should be taught in schools. The Broadway version came out in 1955 (at the heart of McCarthyism to which it was also addressed) and the (much-awarded) movie version, starring Spencer Tracy and Frederic March, in 1960. I read the play and saw the film, both of which left a lasting impression on me.

Evolution, of course, flies in the face of the biblical version of Creation. In the movie, the idea that humanity came from monkeys become a source of heated debate not just between the lawyers in the trial but within the community itself. A threat to faith, or belief, always takes on the aspect of a threat to life itself. I leave the reader to watch the movie, with some help from his friendly neighborhood pirate.

But to get to my point: Christianity is still very much around despite these monumental subversions—as well indeed the subversions themselves. In fact, the subversions have stopped being subversive and now coexist fairly harmoniously with Christian thought. Today, few Christians will be found violently protesting the idea of secular love, even of the passionate, all-consuming, defiant (of heaven or hell) variety, although many of them will still be found violently protesting that kind of love between people of the same sex. This year happily broke the taboo wide open in the latter respect, with three movies, "Brokeback Mountain," "Capote," and "Transamerica," vying for honors in the Oscars. But Christianity and "Wuthering Heights" are no longer oil and water, vampire and crucifix. They are, well, lovers.

Just as well, few Christians today will be found violently objecting to the idea that homo sapiens came from apes. The conventional Christian wisdom now is that the biblical story of the Creation is mythological (in the sense of symbolic or poetic representation) while Darwin's account of human evolution is scientific. There is no contradiction there, as today's deeply religious and deeply scientific minds aver. Ever the twain shall meet.

I don't know how Christianity will learn to live with the propositions of "The Da Vinci Code." I do know, or suspect, that Jesus Christ might remonstrate with the paranoid Christians who mean to defend him by trying to avoid or crush anything that doesn't fit their mental boxes:

"O ye of little faith!"

# Cyberspace debate on 9 million hits

## POLITICAL TIDBITS

### *Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

LAST APRIL 25, I RAN A SHORT ITEM ABOUT the claim of Sigaw ng Bayan spokesperson Raul Lambino that his group's website (www.sigawngbayan.com) has had a phenomenal nine million hits since its launch less than three weeks earlier. He said that cyber traffic had been so heavy that Sigaw had to increase its Internet servers. I said that if this claim as well as his assertion that the number of those resisting Charter change has steadily declined were accurate, they would belie claims that people were not aware of the Cha-cha issue.

Since then there has been a lot of passionate debate in Cyberspace. The non-believers dismiss Lambino's claim as "so obviously made-up" or outright propaganda; someone even suspects that Luli Arroyo's "Internet brigades are working full time, round the clock, to make the hits. If Gloria could produce a million-vote edge by instructing one official on the phone, wouldn't it be easier to produce 8 million Internet hits by hundreds of clicking fingers paid to do that?" he queried.

A former Palace official, Toots Ople, attacked Sigaw's claim that part of the hits came from OFWs supporting Cha-cha, snorting, "Do you think our OFWs have that much time to even look for this site?" My daughter Christine, who has worked with computers over the past decade, thinks the claim was not impossible, but "highly improbable."

* * *

But there are those who feel Sigaw's claim is valid and possible. Someone, who wishes to remain unnamed, wrote: "Are those who comprised the 9 million visitors to Sigaw's websites the reform activists empowered by the new technology? Does it also include e-activists who virulently oppose Charter reform but have no choice but to visit the website out of curiosity or spite?" Arguing that in our networked societies, 9 million hits in 21 days are easy to reach, he computed the daily average web visits at roughly 428,500 a day. This is only slightly lower than the average daily visits to a hot Teri Hatcher (of "Desperate Housewives" fame) website to download her pictures. He said an interested visitor can have multiple visits to their favored websites and Sigaw's, because it's updated almost daily, falls under this category. He argued that the visitors include Pinoys in technologically advanced countries, such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Singapore and Hong Kong.

* * *

This believer pointed out that Lambino's report of Sigaw's three web addresses, dot.com, dot.net and a dot.org., could have contributed to the phenomenon. "Sigaw values the trust of the millions supporting the cause of Charter change and has been rewarded with site revisits and the good news passed on to their friends, families and colleagues," he said.

He also stressed that it's "imaginable" that ordinary Filipinos can access the Internet using a P100 pre-paid card that guarantees up to 18 hours of Internet use. Or they could go to the nearest Cyber-cafés that have sprouted not just in Metro Manila but in the provinces as well. "Increasing Internet usage demonstrates the liberating force of the new technology, a force that many in the elite have yet come to accept," he said.

* * *

The guy who caused the furious debate, Raul Lambino, sent in this retort:

"Visitor bandwidth usage averages 2 gigabytes daily for only around 200 pages that compose the entire website so far (one gigabyte is equivalent to one thousand megabytes; to illustrate how big it is, an ordinary floppy diskette is equivalent to 1.4 megabytes). Any website administrator knows that this figure is half the maximum monthly bandwidth allowance of a regular webhosting service. The www.sigawngbayan.com uses a static sitemeter. What this means is simple: it relies on the access logs automatically rolled daily by its webhost providers. It does not employ free sitemeters that abound in the electronic world. Most free sitemeters come expensive as their providers flood administrators' e-mail boxes with spam (unwanted e-mails) which come from third parties the freegivers share the user's address to. This 'gateway' is used by better-educated techies to enter into the bowels of a site, play around for sometime, and leave the administrators with severe headaches. In short, we hold our site's security very seriously and that credibility of statistics is the better judgment call for us, rather than rapidity of reports—the latter serving only to satisfy the amusement of nosey know-it-alls.

"We do not also use our webhost's counters menu since they tend to display dissimilar hits reports, as a site can be viewed either as www.sigawngbayan.com or simply sigawngbayan.com. Chances are one URL or web address will be visited more than the other variant. We can only imagine how this seeming discrepancy would again be used to pummel our down-to-earth intent of promoting people's initiative. We will not belabor the fact that the aesthetics of the pre-programmed counters of our webhost do not conform to our website layout using advance software. If only we are not protecting the identities of site visitors who support our crusade, but meantime want to remain anonymous, we would be more than willing to make public the access logs of www.sigawngbayan.com, so opinion makers would not waste precious column space to question an insignificant, grass roots-operated and volunteer-funded website hits' stats. There they can see that indeed, a phenomenon is really happening in a people's website, courtesy of visitors coming largely from the United States, Australia, the Middle East, China and many countries abroad, including a single computer terminal from Congo that's being used to access the Sigaw website faithfully two times a day since April 15."

*(To be continued)*

# Starry, starry nights

## YOUNG BLOOD

### *Apple Mendola*

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.*—Ed.

IT'S A WONDER HOW LOOKING AT THOSE STARS TWINKLING far away can bring back so many happy and painful memories for me.

Wasn't it only yesterday when my playmates and I climbed through the window to lie on the cold tin roof and looked breathlessly at the night sky sprayed with thousands of stars? Except for a dense relative who usually came during the day to do the cleaning and the cooking, my sister and I were home alone that night. Our grandparents (who raised us) were in Cebu at that time, leaving us to invite two of our playmates to sleep over for the night. And sleep we did, under a canopy of stars, after long conversations about school, dolls, Chinese garters and those silly, little boys. We later found ourselves crawling back through the old window when the cold became too much to bear since all we had on were our flimsy pajamas. That night, I wished (now, my grandmother would have been shocked to know this) that one of those silly, little boys in school, especially the one with the dimple on his chin, could see me in one of my pretty dresses instead of the drab school uniform we had to wear.

There were nights when a cloud would hide us in darkness for quite some time, as all of us ran and hid among the bushes and old rubber tires and up the old chico tree in our backyard. The tall, skinny boy with wide, frightened eyes would look for us in the darkness as we played hide and seek. We were also scared that something or someone would grab us from behind and drag us deeper into the darkness, as we waited for the boy to go by, so that with hands over our mouths and our hearts in our throats, we would claim victory over the crestfallen "it." Those were nights of hammering heartbeats and great fun which had to end when the old folks called us home.

But there was also a night that I wished had never occurred. That was the night when I sat outside, willing myself to stop thinking about the little girl lying dead inside the funeral parlor while the embalmer was poking her everywhere and pumping something amid the pungent odor of the chemical. The little girl was my niece, and she had been found dead, lying facedown on the shore a short distance from our mother's house. Our mother, a chronic gambler, was supposed to be babysitting her but instead went out to play *tong-its* with the neighbors.

My sister never forgave her for that, but we still had to deal with the painful process of getting over the thousand what-ifs and get on with our lives. We had to make a mighty effort to forget the little girl (and dear God was she little—less than 3 years old—and her coffin was so pitifully small that we decided to put in her favorite stuffed cat when we buried her) and put away the baby pictures and the little dresses. We had to try to forget that she had ever been born.

I am looking at the stars again tonight—thousands, millions of celestial bodies that look so wonderful to touch and nowhere near the reality that they are balls of fire like the sun. Isn't it wonderful how they can look like this from afar?

Who was it who said that stars are children waiting for their turn to be born? I notice one star, bigger and brighter than the rest, and I think about the star of Bethlehem that guided the three Magi to the place where Jesus was born. But my wish right now is that my little niece is that star.

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*Apple Mendola, 25, is a Communication Arts graduate of the University of the Philippines Tacloban College.*

# Break a leg, theater lovers!

## AT LARGE

### *Rina Jimenez-David*

TODAY MARKS THE FIRST DAY OF THE 31ST Unesco-International Theater Institute World Congress, the first time in the 58-year history of the congress that it's being held in Southeast Asia.

About a thousand delegates from almost a hundred countries are expected to take part in the congress, including what the organizers call "the world's theater powers," among them ministers of culture, playwrights, actors, directors, producers and scholars.

This year's congress theme is quite a mouthful: "Ancestral Roots to New Artistic Routes of Expression: Mobilizing Cultural Diversity to Achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals." But Cecile Guidote-Alvarez. executive director of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and president of the ITI-Philippines, the moving force behind the many activities connected with the congress, sees nothing amiss in linking the arts and cultural heritage to such prosaic developmental goals as those articulated in the MDGs.

What can artists, and the artistic community, contribute to the achievement of such goals as the eradication of poverty, addressing diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, improving women's and children's health, achieving gender equality and protecting the environment?

This is what participants in the Leaders Forum, which begins May 23 and over which Unesco director general Koichiro Matsuura will preside and which has drawn such personalities as UN officials, ministers of culture, several Nobel Laureates and Unesco Artists of Peace, will be discussing. Several artists have also been invited to submit works that seek to explain what the MDGs are and what achieving them by 2015 would mean for humanity.

* * *

BEFORE THEN, starting today, the World Festival of Drama Schools will be launched, bringing together about 150 participants from 12 countries. Delegations from top theater schools around the world are fanning out to 10 institutions around the country—six in Luzon, one in Iloilo, three in Mindanao and some in Metro Manila—to stage plays and conduct workshops and interact with young performers and their teachers.

"It's the SEA Games all over again," said Alvarez, recalling the staging of various events in different athletic venues around the country, which made the regional sports event truly a national experience.

The World Festival is also complemented by the "Theater Olympics of the Nations," from May 22-28 during which the delegates will be treated to nightly performances featuring outstanding theater groups from Asia, Africa, the Arab States, Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Europe, as well as the Philippines.

It's not an "Olympics" in the traditional competitive sense, explained Alvarez and Nick Lizaso, the festival director. Instead, the performances will showcase the talents of the various national theater groups while allowing everyone to interact and collaborate on the creation of new and innovative theater styles and approaches.

Not coincidentally, one of the main themes of the gathering is "Celebrating Diversity," with productions that run the gamut from indigenous and popular theater forms to traditional native drama and classics of the Western repertoire.

* * *

PARTICULARLY exciting is the workshop component simultaneous with the World Congress, conducted by foreign theater professional as well as respected Filipino theater figures. Among those conducting workshops are professor Andrey Andreev from the Theatre Academy of St. Petersburg who will be handling a workshop on Chekov, including the production of a performance of the Russian playwright's "The Wedding Proposal."

Japanese actor/stage director Sayoko Shirotani will oversee the demonstration workshop on "Japanese Traditional Culture," with a demonstration performance at workshop's end. Local dancers, actors and directors are invited to participate in this dance/movement workshop. Think "Memoirs of a Geisha," only this time more authentic, I would say.

Professor Maria Horne from Buffalo University in New York will be running a workshop on "American Method Acting," which should be of particular interest to local actors and directors, with a demonstration to cap the five-day program.

Filipino director and award-winning playwright, now US-based Dr. Anton Juan, will be facilitating the workshop and showcase production on "Creative Theater," focusing on creative techniques to achieve through theater the MDGs.

The first three workshops will be held from May 17-21 at St. Paul University while Juan's workshop will be held at the Lyceum of the Philippines. A maximum of 25 participants will be accepted for every workshop.

* * *

TOWARD the end of the press lunch held to announce the details of the congress, we media folk had to beg Alvarez to stop piling on even more details and activities as we were getting "information overload." We all agreed that, given the swirl of meetings, plenaries, workshops and performances all going on at the same time, including premieres and stagings of dramas and zarzuelas, only a powerhouse like her could have handled all these without losing her way.

Notable, too, has been the relative silence surrounding the entire proceedings, given the significance of the event and the grand reach of the organizers' ambitions. But I'm sure the people most concerned, especially young artists and their mentors who've made the local theater scene such an exciting and vibrant landscape, are all agog about what's going on in their field.

And it is for them that we wish the congress and festival success, and the flourishing of creative, artistic and developmental talent. Break a leg, everyone!

# Militarizing the Andes

## WORLD VIEW

### *Juan Gabriel Tokatlian*

WHILE THE WORLD'S ATTENTION IS RIVETED on Iraq, the Colombia Plan, developed by the United States to fight drugs and left-wing guerrillas in Colombia, may soon be applied as a general strategy across the nations of the Andes, if not all of Latin America. Colombia, it seems, is only mentioned nowadays in connection with President Alvaro Uribe's reelection bid later this month. As a result, the spread of the Colombia Plan, despite its meager and ambivalent results, has remained obscured.

When it was unveiled in 2000, the Colombia Plan had a double rationale: to slash narcotics production and exports while strengthening Colombia's counterinsurgency campaign against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels. Back then, the United States saw Colombia as hosting two increasingly interwoven threats, which, without a successful military response, heralded the grim prospect of Colombia becoming a failed state.

Indeed, despite receiving almost $1.4 billion from the US between 1989 and 1999 to fight drug trafficking, Colombia had not reduced the problem. Worse still, the economic, territorial and military insurgency of the FARC guerrillas was growing stronger. Indeed, between 1995 and 1998, the Colombian army suffered its worst setbacks—including casualties, captures and ambushes—in the four decades of the insurgency.

With the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the response of the Bush administration, the "war against terrorism" became relevant to Colombia. As a result, the failed three-year dialogue between the government of Andrés Pastrana (Uribe's predecessor) and FARC was buried in February 2002, with the conflict definitively internationalized through massive and indirect US intervention.

Between 2000 and 2005, Washington paid out nearly $4 billion to Colombia, with approximately 75 percent of the total going to the military and the police, and increased its presence in the country with 800 soldiers and 600 private security contractors. Indeed, Colombia is now the fifth largest recipient of US aid in the world.

US policy was (and remains) aimed primarily at the "war on drugs," to be fought mainly by Colombians themselves. But the "war on terrorism" in Latin America has also fallen to the Colombians, with a US rear guard backing up the Colombian state in order to avoid American casualties on a new front, and an overextension of US military commitments.

When evaluated as an anti-narcotics strategy, the Colombia Plan's failure is self-evident. Even though the Colombian government chemically eradicated 523,000 hectares of coca between 2000 and 2004, 114,000 hectares of coca remained under cultivation last year. Likewise, although Uribe's government approved the extradition of 304 Colombian nationals and 11 foreigners (most to the United States) between 2002 and 2005, drugs-linked organized crime continues to thrive and expand in Colombia.

Of course, the large cartels no longer exist. Instead, the business has become more "democratic" with the multiplication of so-called "boutique cartels." This has created an even greater diversity of drugs (natural and synthetic) at lower prices and higher purity than 15 years ago, during the heyday of the Medellin drug barons.

The results of the Colombia Plan's counter-insurgency effort are equally mixed. The military strengthening of Colombia in the last five years has been massive, with the offensive capacity, geographic deployment and public credibility of the armed forces much greater than before. Until 2002, some 3,000 kidnappings were reported each year in Colombia; by 2005, the government had reduced that figure to less than 1,000. Between 2000 and 2004, the National Liberation Army (ELN) was seriously weakened, and the FARC retreated to a smaller area, notably reducing its combat potential.

However, while ELN may be strategically beaten, the FARC is not. On the contrary, since 2005, the FARC has been escalating its attacks. Moreover, Colombia has not effectively recovered territorial sovereignty in areas controlled by armed right-wing groups like the United Self Defenses of Colombia. The implicit immunity from prosecution these groups received in exchange for their demobilization has done little to help.

So, after five years, the Colombia Plan, a part of two simultaneous global wars—against drugs and terrorism—has produced only uncertain and scanty results. Yet this has not led to any official questioning of tactics. On the contrary, both the US and the Uribe government regard what has happened in Colombia as a "model" to be emulated across the Andes in order to prevent other countries in the region from becoming failed states.

In fact, this "model" is already being applied in the region. In Ecuador, the United States has deployed its military power through the renovation of the Manta military base. The United States continues to pressure Peru's government to shoot down planes supposedly linked to drug trafficking, and is trying to convince Evo Morales' new government in Bolivia to continue a failed "war on drugs." But, as in Colombia, the effort to militarize the "war on drugs" and the "war on terrorism" seems likely only to generate more disorder.

*Project Syndicate*

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# Extras

### *Lyra Dacio*

ONE OF MY PET PEEVES IS HAVING THE MINERAL WATER I ordered in a restaurant served with a glass of ice. Hello? The reason I want mineral water is that I want to be sure that I'm drinking pure, sparkling, clear water that passed several filtering and purifying processes, and I can't say the same for those ice cubes, excuse me.

But such is life: we ask for one thing and we are given another, or probably the same thing with a cherry on top. But depending on the person and depending on the wish, the cherry can be a piece of fortune or a piece of misfortune (allergies come to mind).

If there's something extra that goes with some of the things we wish for, sometimes we get much less of what we wanted. Like being served warm mineral water on a hot, sunny afternoon. Or ordering *sago't gulaman* only to find out that the vendor has run out of *sago*. Or taking the MRT, only to find out that the air-conditioning is off. Or finding an intellectually fulfilling job that doesn't pay much. Or being invited for supper and missing the climax of a telenovela. Or getting married, only to be separated by work. Or flashing your best smile at a guy who doesn't see it. Or getting a hug that doesn't feel warm enough.

But let's not dwell on the negative and highlight those extras that bring that unexpected smile to our lips. Like taking home a bag of loot from a children's party. Or getting a free magazine after buying a bunch of books. Or free makeup samples after patronizing a cosmetics line. Or freebies from a wedding expo. Or an unpredicted incentive bonus. Or a free massage after getting a haircut. Or being offered a seat on the train. Or hearing a hearty laugh after telling a corny joke. Or receiving a compliment after doing a good job. Or hearing words of thanks after opening a door for someone. Or getting a goodbye kiss.

But back to my pet peeve. Maybe I should not blame the waiter or the poor training he got. The Bible says, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you." That says you must ask exactly for what you need, down to the nitty-gritty.

I think I have solved my problem by being very specific and saying, "Cold mineral water. And no ice please."

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*Lyra Dacio, 28, is doing her master's at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.*

**NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:**

*Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.*

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# Way to react to innuendoes regarding one's mother

ON MAY 19, OUR FAMILY WILL be in the province to visit our children's great-grandmother, Lola Lola Ving, as she turns 92 years old. We will have a small party on her birthday—to celebrate her long and well-lived life. On May 19 and the days thereafter, we will be doing what families normally do during summertime. What we will not be doing is to watch the much-talked about movie "The Da Vinci Code."

Much has been written about why we should or should not watch this movie. I would like to add my voice to the fray, as a response to those who tell me to "chill," not to be so uptight about a movie that is a "work of fiction."

Let me start by saying that I love my own mom to the ends of the earth. She is the best mom in the world to me. I often reflect how I can be more like her—as she and my father raised five good citizens and children of God—in the hope of raising my own children successfully.

In the same way, the Catholic Church is also our Mother. Through the centuries, Our Holy Mother the Church has tried her very best to preach and live the teachings of Our Lord on love, to bring the Good News to everyone, to feed the hungry, to comfort the sick and needy and to show mercy.

I know that my mom has her faults—I have experienced them first hand!—but because of my love and loyalty to her, I would not allow anyone to say bad things, most especially lies, about her. In the same way, I will not pay a centavo to watch a movie that maligns my Mother the Church whom I love so much.

The movie may be exciting, thought-provoking, "two-thumbs up." It may not even cause me to doubt my faith; it will probably provide me two hours of entertainment. But this movie, masquerading as fiction, is still riddled with lies, half-truths, criticisms and innuendoes about my Mother the Church, painting her to be an oppressive religion that will stop at nothing, not even murder, to sustain its power. It questions the divinity and holy purity of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who died a painful death for me. This movie clearly does not deserve my time and money.

A saint once said that we must drown evil in a super-abundance of good. Instead of watching this movie, I will instead seek to learn more about the truths of my faith. I will try to be more compassionate to the children begging for "*pambili ng tinapay* (money for bread)," more patient with the helpers who exasperate me, more temperate with eating now that it is summertime.

This way, I will not be cowed into shame or pretend to be indifferent to the faults of the Catholic Church alluded to in the movie. Instead, I can raise my head high that I am a better person because of the teachings and example of my Holy Mother the Church.

To my fantastic mom Tita Casus, and to my Holy Mother the Catholic Church, thank you for everything! A belated Happy Mother's Day!

**—CAROL ANNE CASUS TANSINGCO,**
**fatcat@pldtdsl.net**

LA MESA dam supplies most of Metro Manila's water

PDI PHOTO

# Premature worries about health risks to Metro

A LOT HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND said about the housing project of the 1,411 retired employee-awardees of the Nawasa (now MWSS). The project was supposed to have been carried out more than 38 years ago, considering its potential threats of polluting La Mesa Dam, the source of drinking water for Metro Manila's entire population.

As the third lawyer from our firm who has acted as counsel of the retired employees since 1981 (their earlier counsels being the late Sen. Lorenzo M. Tañada and Commissioner Martiniano P. Vivo), I have been requested by Angelino Pascual, an 86-year-old awardee and chair of the 1968 NWSA Employees Housing Project-Implementation Committee, to make it known that they too would not want the La Mesa Dam to be polluted, and that the public's interest is also their interest. Just like the rest of Metro Manila, they too will source their drinking water from the dam.

At this point, however, Pascual feels that it is premature for the parties concerned to outrightly reject the construction of their housing project at the present site (its third), considering that the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) has not yet been submitted to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for its review. He hopes that despite the present controversy, the DENR will be able to conduct a sober and independent assessment of the technical data to be submitted.

He added that the parties concerned should also not fault the awardees from insisting on building their housing units at its current site. If it was a forgone conclusion that the housing project would pollute the La Mesa Dam, the 1989-1990 MWSS board of trustees would certainly not have allocated the 58 hectares along the Quirino Highway for the project. Moreover, since 1996, his group had consulted different environmental specialists who assured that the adoption of certain measures would prevent the potential threats of pollution to the dam.

While it is true that a recent MWSS-commissioned study recommended not to use the current site for the housing project, Pascual and his co-awardees cannot be blamed for deeming the same as self-serving, considering that the MWSS itself has not been eager to abide by its contractual obligations with them for the last 38 years.

But whatever decision of the DENR, the awardees have committed to abide by the same, as what has been provided for in the deed of sale.

**—WIGBERTO R. TAÑADA JR.,**
**Tañada, Vivo & Tan,**
**6/F Strata 2000 Building,**
**Emerald Avenue,**
**Ortigas Center, Pasig City**

# A Constitution of our own free will

THIS IS THE WORST TIME TO revise or rewrite the Constitution. The country has hardly recovered from the attempts to unseat the President.

If ever we rewrite the Constitution, this should be done not earlier than 2008, when things have, more or less, settled down. The Philippine peso shall have stabilized by then at a favorable rate, and the economy shall have significantly recovered.

Only a Constitutional Convention can truly articulate the wishes of the people. To help insulate this body from politics, there should be a rule to ban all members of the House of Representatives and the Senate from becoming its members. No two members of the Constitutional Convention should be related by consanguinity or affinity within the fourth civil degree. This will eliminate political dynasties that have a stranglehold in government and politics. And the membership of this body should be limited to 85 (one from each of the 79 provinces and six from Metro Manila).

Parts of 2008 and 2009 should be devoted to the dissemination of the draft constitution and the ratification by the people. In the year 2010, the new Constitution should be ready for implementation.

Between now and 2008, let us all stop bickering, cheating and scheming. We should look forward to ushering in a climate of sustainable economic recovery and political stability—enough to rewrite a Constitution of our own free will.

**—APOLONIO G. RAMOS,**
**42 Mindanao St.,**
**Marikina City**

# Sabio denies attending Makati meeting

IN HIS COCKTAILS COLUMN titled "Death by dissipation" (PDI, 5/8/06), Victor C. Agustin wrote that: "Incidentally, Brodett was seen meeting with PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio, Commissioner Ricardo Abcede, Mike Arroyo's lawyer Jesus Santos and another unidentified individual at the Peninsula Tabac Room Friday Night."

Agustin's statement is not correct.

I was not anywhere in Makati City that night (Friday, May 5, 2006). Neither was I with any of the personalities he mentioned.

**—CAMILO L. SABIO,**
**chair,**
**Presidential Commission**
**on Good Government,**
**IRC Bldg., Mandaluyong City**

# One among many devoted teachers

"TEACHER FINDS HOME IN unexpected place." (PDI, 4/30/06) Nena Monte, a Ph.D. holder, is a Catholic devoting her time to Muslim communities, educating children, sacrificing her chances of being promoted, without so much regard for her safety. I find her story inspiring.

I am a Christian married to a Muslim. I respect the ways and traditions of the Muslims. Monte is a great help in putting young Muslims in a better position to shape a better future for themselves.

Monte is just one of the many dedicated and devoted educators around the country. I hope she will become a model not only for her students but also for other teachers to emulate.

I never dreamed of becoming a teacher. But in my present commitments, I have discovered that teaching is indeed a noble profession. It is quite fulfilling to see your students apply later in life what you have taught them. The thought that you have become part of their better selves warms the heart.

I salute Nena Monte and all the teachers out there reaching out to students in far-flung areas.

**—ALBERT SARMIENTO,**
**alamid67@yahoo.com**

# Grateful for students who see need to remove GMA

THIS REFERS TO SOME LETTERS from INQUIRER readers criticizing the behavior of Maria Theresa Pangilinan for heckling Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. It is regrettable that these self-proclaimed upright, educated, moral people have the gall to call Pangilinan's behavior a "disgrace," but they are silent about the more reprehensible actions of an illegitimate, corrupt, cheating and lying "President."

One writer saw Pangilinan's behavior as indicative of the failure of our educational system. In itself, the view reveals the writer's ignorance of the system's real problems. Our educational system is a failure because of corruption and the distorted priorities of the government, especially the present administration which is bent on doing everything, legal and illegal, to perpetuate itself in power. What do you expect of an administration that spends billions for electoral fraud, bribery, anomalous contracts and other corrupt acts but does not have enough funds to build classrooms for its youth?

The present economic and political turmoil is the offshoot of the machinations of one small lady who is big-time when it comes to greasing the entire corrupt machinery that keeps her in power. Her removal is not an all-cure to our problems, but it is the first, necessary step toward their solution. We should thank that we still have students like Pangilinan who have the ability to clearly "discern" the need for this first step and the courage to work for that step to be taken, even if it means risking their lives.

Proper decorum? I wish those letter-writers will have the nerve to demand that from their idol.

**—JOSEPH NICDAO,**
**Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Kaya nila... Ikaw kaya, kaya mo?
ULTIMATE GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
Tuesday 8:30 PM
ABC
Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com
For more TV schedules:
Visit www.ClickTheCity.com
wap.clickthecity.com
Key in CTC TV and send to [illegible]

| Channel | 2:30PM | 3:00PM | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | 5:30PM | 6:00PM | 6:30PM | 7:00PM | 7:30PM | 8:00PM | 8:30PM | 9:00PM | 9:30PM | 10:00PM | 10:30PM | 11:00PM | 11:30PM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABC 5 |  |  |  | National Geographic | Volleyball League |  |  |  | Sentro | World's Most Amazing Videos | TNA Impact |  | Pinoy Guinness |  | Big News | Next Action Star |  | ALI |  |
| ABS-CBN 2 | Kapamilya Cinema |  |  | Pasion de Amor | Little Amy | Mr. Bean | Naruto | Outstanding Twins | TV Patrol World |  | Gulong Ng Palad | Sa Piling Mo | Pinoy Big Brother | Panday | Wonderful Life | Nagmamahal, Kapamilya |  |  | Insider |
| AXN |  | Lost (Season II) |  | House |  | Sports Disaster IV |  | The 4400 (Season 2) |  | Pensacola (Season III) |  | The Amazing Race (Season IX) |  | Alias (Season IV) |  | CSI: NY (Season 2) |  | Rescue Me |  |
| Cartoon Network | Police Academy | Richie Rich | Tom & Jerry Show | Baby Looney Tunes | Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi | Codename: Kids Next Door | The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy | The Simpsons |  | Power Rangers Wild Force | PokeMon | Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel |  | The Simpsons |  | Mucha Lucha! | Duck Dodgers | Justice League | Samurai Jack |
| Cinema One |  | Dalaga Si Misis, Binata Si Mister |  |  |  | Batang PX |  |  |  | Friends & Lovers |  |  |  | Asin At Paminta |  |  |  | Aswang |  |
| Cinemax | Everything That Rises (2:25 PM) |  |  | The Outlaw Josey Wales (4:10 PM) |  |  |  |  | A Slight Case Of Murder (6:20 PM) |  |  | The Rundown |  |  | Pleasantville (9:45 PM) |  |  |  | The Man Who Wouldn't Die |
| CNN |  | Business International |  | World News | World Sport | Larry King Live |  | Business International | World Sport | World News Asia |  | World News | World Sport | World News Asia | World News Asia | Your World Today |  |  |  |
| Crime/Suspense |  | Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice |  | Law & Order: Special Victims Unit |  | Profiler |  | Forensic Files | Body Of Evidence | Law & Order |  | Law & Order: Special Victims Unit |  | Surface |  | Prison Break |  | Law & Order: Criminal Intent |  |
| Discovery Channel |  | I Shouldn't Be Alive |  | Rides |  | Extreme Machines |  | Blueprint For Disaster |  | Wild Discovery |  | Hour Asia |  | Electric Man |  | Blueprint For Disaster |  | Crime Stories |  |
| Disney Channel | Mr. Bean, The Animated Series | Totally Spies | Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny | Mickey Mouseworks | Lilo & Stitch | Martin Mystery | Totally Spies | Kim Possible | Mr. Bean, The Animated Series | That's So Raven | Pirates Of The Caribbean: Curse Of Black Pearl |  |  | Suite Life Of Zack And Cody | Phil Of The Future | Kim Possible | Totally Spies | Robin Hood |  |
| ETC | Insider Weekend | Project Runway |  | Change of Heart | Elimidate | Blind Date | Fifth Wheel | Seinfeld | Ambush Makeover | The Tyra Banks Show |  | One Tree Hill 3 |  | The O.C. 3 |  | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | The Tonight Show With Jay Leno |  |
| ETC 2nd Avenue |  | Starting Over |  | The Maury Povich Show |  | The Jerry Springer Show |  | Dr. Phil |  | NBC Nightly News | The Inside Edition | The Ellen Show |  | Wheel Of Fortune | Jeopardy | Blowout 2 |  | NBC Nightly News | The Inside Edition |
| EWTN | Super Saints | Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus | ABCatholic | Angel Force | Rosary With Mother Angelica | EWTN Gallery | Mirror Of The Soul | Lord, Have Mercy | Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men | The Journey Home Encore |  | Daily Mass Live |  | Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus | The Good Code: The Natural Law | Chaplet Of Divine Mercy | Octavia Dies | Web Of Faith |  |
| Fox News |  | On The Record With Greta Van Susteren |  | The O'Reilly Factor |  | Your World With Neil Cavuto |  | Fox & Friends |  |  |  |  |  | Fox News Live |  |  |  |  |  |
| GMA 7 | Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat | Now and Forever (3:15 PM) | Snow White Sweet Love |  | Saiyuki | Dragonball Z | Gokusen | 24 Oras |  | Extra Challenge | Majika | Love Of The Condor Heroes |  | Jewel In The Palace |  | Bahay Mo Ba 'To? |  |  | Saksi |
| Hallmark Channel |  | Mcleod's Daughters IV |  | Search For The Jewel Of Polaris |  |  |  | Bewitched | The Nanny | Judging Amy |  | Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye II |  | Judging Amy |  | Dogs Gone Love |  |  | Judging Amy (11:45 PM) |
| HBO |  | A Promise Kept (3:15 PM) |  |  | Harry's War (4:45 PM) |  |  |  | The Crew |  |  | Deadwood 21: Amalgamation And Capital |  | Deadwood 22: Advances, None Miraculous |  | Necessary Roughness (9:50 PM) |  |  | Shaun Of The Dead (11:40 PM) |
| Hero TV | Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters | Yakitate! Japan | Mr. Ajikko | D.I.C.E. | Samurai Deeper Kyo | Sorcerer Hunter | Soul Hunters | Lost Universe | Beyblade G-Revolution | Yu-Gi-Oh GX | Naruto | Mirmo de Pon | Inuyasha | Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters | Yakitate! Japan | Mr. Ajikko | D.I.C.E. | Samurai Deeper Kyo | Sorcerer Hunter |
| IBC 13 |  | EZ Shop |  |  |  | Sabas On The Go | IBC Express Balita | Pangarap Kong Jackpot |  | Global Family Series |  | ME TV |  | PTA Best Of The Philippines |  | Global Family Series | IBC News Tonite | Home Shopping Network |  |
| JackTV | The Daily Show With Jon Stewart | The Late Show David Letterman |  | Raw |  |  |  | The Batman | Just For Laughs (Gags) | Mad TV |  | That 70s Show | Arrested Development | The Late Show David Letterman |  | The Daily Show With Jon Stewart | Comedy Central Presents | South Park | The Man Show |
| Lifestyle Network | Designer Remix | 30 Minute Meals | Wolfgang Puck | Sweet Dreams | Smart Solutions | Sensible Chic | At Home With | Emeril Live |  | Passion For Dessert | E! News Weekend |  | Look For Less | Martha |  | Napa Style | Sheila Bridges Designer Living | Guess Who's Coming To Decorate |  |
| MTV Philippines |  | Pimp My Ride |  | Handpicked: Pupil | Pop Inc |  | MTV Hits (with SMS) |  |  | Get Spotted | Bing | Sex Ed on the Beach |  | TRL |  | Pimp My Ride |  | Sessions: Pupil | Jams |
| MYX |  | Rock MYX | My MYX | Mellow MYX | Urban MYX | Take 5 | MYX Versions | MYX Firsts | Star MYX | OPM MYX | Pop MYX | MYX Daily Top Ten |  | Top Of The Pops | Radio MYX | MYX News | My MYX | MYX Backtrax | MYXILOG |
| National Geographic | Wildlife Diary | Nat'l Geographic Specials: Wild Dog Wilderness |  | Marine Machines: Squad |  | Wild Orphans | Wildlife Diary | Top 5 - World's Giant Rainforests: The Mystery of Sulawesi |  | WOW! Kalahari Supercats |  | About Asia: Hidden Genders |  | Nat'l Geographic Specials: Devils Of The Deep |  | Air Crash Investigation: Out of Control |  | Hunter Hunted: Victims of Venom |  |
| NBN |  | Teledyaryo Alas-Tres |  | Teledyaryo Sports Atbp |  |  | Dyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila? | Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo |  | Tinig ng Bayan (Live) |  |  |  | Teledyaryo Final Edition |  |  |  | Bantay OCW With Susan K |  |
| Nickelodeon | Chalkzone | Hey Arnold! | SpongeBob SquarePants | My Life As A Teenage Robot | All Grown Up | The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron | The Fairly Odd Parents | Drake & Josh | Naturally Sadie | Romeo | All That | All Grown Up | As Told By Ginger | Four Eyes | SpongeBob SquarePants | The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron | The Fairly Odd Parents | My Dad The Rock Star |  |
| PBO |  |  | [illegible] |  |  |  | Ambon Sa Pong Ng Dagat |  |  |  | Kadenang Bulaklak |  |  |  | Nakagapos Na Puso |  |  |  | Pieta 2 |
| Qtv | Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin |  | Zipang | Kaleido Star | MMS (My Music Station) |  | Moms |  | Magic Ring | Irene | Noel | Project 11 | Family Zoo |  | News On Q | Sana'y Muling Makapiling |  | Irene | Over The Green Fields |
| RPN 9 |  |  |  |  |  | Global Window | RPN Aksyon News | Entertainment Tonight | The Insider | Boarding House North Shore |  | Australia's Next Top Model |  | Paradise Hotel |  | Newswatch Now | Tuesday Night [illegible] |  |  |
| SBN 21 |  |  |  | New Life TV Shopping |  |  |  | Winner TV Shopping |  | Quantum Global |  | Oras Ng Himala |  | Oras ng Katotohanan |  | SBN Music Video |  |  |  |
| Solar Sports |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis Game 4 |  |  |  |  | Solar Sports Desk |  |  |
| Sports Plus |  |  |  | Bay Ban Celebrity Poker Challenge |  |  |  | World Game | Rookie Manual | NOPI Tunervision 11 |  | Ultimate Fighting Championship |  |  |  | Gillette World Cup Preview 12 | NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis Game 4 |  |  |
| Star Movies |  |  |  |  | Trauma |  |  | Fatal Reunion (6:05 PM) |  |  | Dude Where's My Car (7:35 PM) |  |  | Undercover Brother |  |  | The Whole Ten Yards |  |  |
| Star World | Frasier | The Bold & The Beautiful |  | General Hospital |  | Ed |  | The Simpsons | Malcolm In The Middle | Star News Asia | Seinfeld | Charmed |  | The O.C. |  | North Shore |  | Seinfeld | Charmed |
| Studio 23 | Bewitched | Naruto |  |  |  | Batman Beyond | Monkey Typhoon | Spirits | Pinoy Big Brother | Wuzzup Wuzzup | Andromeda |  | Smallville (8:20 PM) | Gilmore Girls (9:10 PM) |  | News Central | Oprah |  | Realty World |

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(All in exact order)
FOUR DIGIT 8 4 8 0

# Across the NATION

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# Palparan says Army infiltrated NPA

**By Tonette Orejas**
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—CONTROVERSIAL ARMY MAJ. GEN. Jovito Palparan Jr. disclosed on Monday that the military in Central Luzon has implanted government spies in the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, as well as in its underground and legal mass organizations.

The supposed infiltration has reportedly led to the new round of bloody purges through the killings of leaders and members of these Leftist groups, he said.

"*Talagang may* infiltration *kami sa kanila* (We really do infiltration work on them). This has been ongoing ever since. It's part of our intelligence effort. We do it as part of government's work of maintaining peace and order," Palparan told the INQUIRER by phone from Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija where his command, the 7th Infantry Division, is based.

Palparan, whom political activists have taken to calling "butcher" for some 500 incidents of human rights violations in Central Luzon, Samar and Mindoro, admitted to using the method after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez insinuated last week that the killings of unarmed progressives were the result of purges within the communist movement.

## Missing Link 2

"This is Operation Missing Link Part two," Palparan added. The first part, known then as Kampanyang Ahos, happened in the 1980s, mostly in the Bicol and Southern Tagalog regions.

Palparan's admission came after last Saturday assassination of Bayan Muna coordinator Manuel Nardo, the 73rd political activists killed in Central Luzon since 2005.

He declined to give details on the extent of the infiltration work. The clashes in Sta. Ignacia, Tarlac, last Jan. 31 were among the results of gaining access from within the NPA, he said.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines' Northern Luzon Command claimed killing 18 rebels in those encounters. Only 10 bodies have actually been retrieved, though.

"*Nagiging praning na sila dahil nabibisto na sila* (They are becoming paranoid)," Palparan said of the stories that leftist organizations and party-list groups were "making out of the killings and abductions," and their attribution to him and the AFP.

## "Prove it"

On his supposed masterminding the murders, he said: "They have to prove it."

Pressed to prove the fielding of state spies, Palparan said he was tied down by a commitment to protect those agents.

According to him, the NPA is not hounded by the AFP only. Its enemies include former comrades who have armed themselves in defense of their lives.

He accused the NPA of being involved in criminal activities like kidnapping, robberies and illegal drugs for reasons that "it is armed."

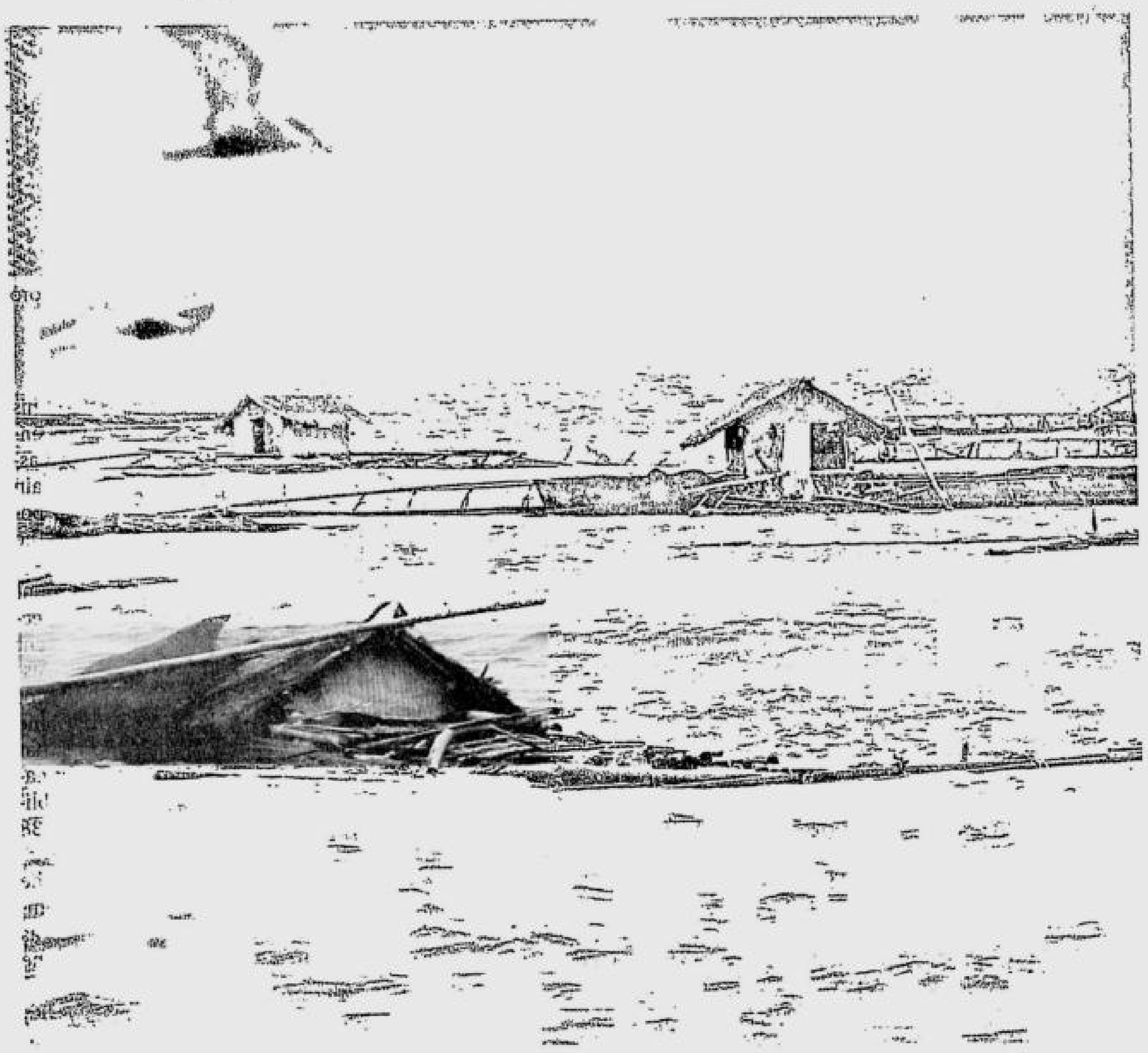
On the other hand, sectoral organizations under the National Democratic Front and their counterparts in the open, legal movement have "offended a lot of people" from the ranks of workers, businessmen, farmers and landlords, he said.

Palparan singled out party-list leaders, saying "even though they're in government, no matter what appearance they take, they are still enemies of the state."

Of the attacks on leftist leaders, he said: "They should blame themselves. What have they been doing? Why should they be targeted? They should ask themselves those questions."

Roman Polintan, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Central Luzon, said the idea of communist purges raised by Gonzalez and Palparan was an attempt to divert the issue away from the Arroyo administration's track record of human rights atrocities.

The rising death toll and the concocted claims alongside the commitments by government to stop the killings and punish the perpetrators indicated "duplicity," said Polintan.



**CALOY** destroys fish cages in the coastal towns of Taal Lake.

SID BALATAN/CONTRIBUTOR

# Northern Samar placed under state of calamity in wake of storm 'Caloy'

**By Joey A. Gabieta**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

TACLOBAN CITY—NORTHERN SAMAR HAS been placed under a state of calamity after tropical storm "Caloy" displaced more than 4,000 families or over 23,000 persons and damaged at least P122 million worth of infrastructure and agriculture.

Provincial board members met in a special session yesterday to act on the request of Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza to declare the entire province under a calamity.

The declaration would allow the provincial government to tap its calamity funds in order to help the residents in five of the 22 towns affected by the storm.

These are the capital town of Catarman, Capul, Mondragon, San Antonio and Mapanas.

In Catarman, 398 families (2,348 persons) from seven barangays were affected when the storm damaged their houses.

Worst hit were Barangays Sampaguita and Jose Abad Santos where a total of 110 families (816 persons) were rendered homeless when their homes, which were made of light materials, were swept by the rampaging waters from the Catarman River.

## Warehouse shelter

The affected families temporarily took shelter in a warehouse in Barangay Sampaguita.

Lemuel Arninio, spokesperson of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, said 3,000 families (15,000 individuals) were affected by the storm in Mapanas; 500 families (2,500 individuals) in Mondragon; 499 families (2,495 persons) in Capul; and 170 families (1,020 persons) in San Antonio.

Arninio said damage to infrastructure was pegged at more than P120 million while damage to agricultural and fishery was initially placed at P1.14 million.

"Up to now, the entire province is still without power," he told the INQUIRER.

Caloy, the third and the biggest storm to hit the country this year, also affected provinces in Western Visayas.

## Missing

In Iloilo, seven crew members of a fishing boat were rescued 500 yards off the coast of Estancia town after their boat capsized at the height of tropical storm Caloy on Friday.

In Antique, the number of evacuees in Sibalom town reached 154 families or 764 persons due to rising water at the Sibalom River.

The national road connecting Iloilo and Antique provinces is still impassable to vehicles because of a damaged bridge in Barangay Nanga in Guimbal town.

At least 18 barangays in Iloilo City were flooded, according to the City Social Welfare and Development Office.

Rescuers were also searching for five residents of Barangay Daga in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental who have been missing since Thursday when they went out to the sea.

The Negros Occidental Provincial Disaster Management Team (PDMT) said Solgen Locsin, Toto de la Cruz and Banhao de la Cruz had not returned home since they left on board a small banca to catch some crabs.

Two other residents of Daga were also missing. They were identified as Aladino Dolorosa, 58, and his son Glenn, 25.

Glenn was allegedly chained to his house because he was said to be mentally ill. But on Thursday, he was able to free himself and went to the sea to take a bath.

Aladino got in a banca to look for him. But the PDMT report said both had not been found. ***With a report from Carla Gomez and Nestor Burgos Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau***

# Former senator Tañada to lead lawyers of 5 arrested farmers

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—VETERAN human rights lawyer and former senator Wigberto Tañada will lead the panel of defense counsels for the five farmers who were accused of being New People's Army (NPA) rebels and held incommunicado in Tagaytay City last April 28, the wife of one of the accused said.

Laura Sarmiento, wife of alleged NPA leader Aristedes Sarmiento, said Tañada had agreed to lead the four-man defense counsel of the supposed rebels who are now detained at this camp.

Along with Sarmiento's husband, also arrested were Axel Alejandro Pinpin, Rico Ybañez, Michael Masayes and Riel Custodio.

The five vehemently denied being NPA members, saying they were just peasant leaders and civilians in Cavite.

Sarmiento said they already had initial talks with the former lawmaker from Quezon.

She said her husband used to work as a researcher for Tañada.

"Senator Tañada still considers Aris as a friend. He himself said he was shocked upon learning that my husband was arrested for being a supposed secretary of the NPA in Cavite," Sarmiento told the INQUIRER.

Lawyers Filemon Nolasco, Poch Cinco and Carlo Ybañez will join Tañada as defense counsels, Sarmiento said.

She added that they were also talking with lawyer Jose Emmanuel Diokno, son of the late Sen. Jose Diokno, to join the battery of lawyers for the accused.

On Sunday, Sarmiento and 30 other relatives of the suspected rebels went to this camp to attend Mass dedicated for the prisoners.

The Mass, celebrated by activist priest Fr. Joe Dizon of Imus, Cavite, was held inside the office of the base police of Camp Vicente Lim.

The room is a few steps away from the prison cell where the five are being held.

In his homily, Dizon advised the families of the suspected NPAs not to be ashamed of what had happened to their loved ones. ***Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

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**PILGRIMAGE**

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Typhoon Caloy's strong, gusty winds won't deter pilgrims from flocking to the Manaoag Church in Manaoag, Pangasinan, a shrine believed to bring miracles to the faithful.

# Baguio execs take 2nd look at British firm's waste plans

**By Vincent Cabreza**
*PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY COUNcil is reconsidering a London-based firm's offer to turn the summer capital's garbage into clean energy, years after it reneged on a similar deal during the administration of Mayor Bernardo Vergara.

The Brind International Group was allowed to develop a thermal conversion technology for the city dump in 2001, despite fears raised by the city general services office that handled city garbage collection until 2004.

The council eventually revoked its contract with Brind in 2003, when the firm failed to deliver the technology.

"We were finally told that they lost their top resource man during the 2001 attack on New York City and they needed time to recoup," said Mayor Braulio Yaranon.

Glenville Gibson, Brind president, again offered to resume its contract in 2005, but had yet to present a formal offer to the city council, said Councilor Erdolfo Balajadia, chair of the council's committee on environment.

Brind is among the Top Three companies that a government technical working group has found eligible for leasing and rehabilitating Baguio's solid waste management operations, Yaranon said.

The city government's change of heart comes on the heels of a public clamor to shut down Baguio's only dump.

At least 50 residents of Irisan, the largest barangay in Baguio, marched to City Hall on Monday to demand the immediate closure of the Irisan dump.

The protest actions were mounted in reaction to reports that Yaranon had suspended the completion of a 10-year solid waste management plan that would have addressed the city's garbage problems.

The dump had been the basis of several suits because storm-triggered landslides in the area had affected communities of neighboring Tuba town.

The Clean Air Act and the Solid Waste Management Act also make illegal operations in the Irisan dump, Yaranon said, although the city government was not legally in default because it had ongoing programs to resolve the garbage impasse.

But the mayor said he was compelled to suspend the development of a master plan because the government had not yet decided how it would convert the city's garbage.

Apart from a thermal converter, the city has the option to tap technology that will impound methane gas developed from garbage, Yaranon said.

The city government is operating a compost plant at the dump, and has opened waste recycling centers in several barangays.

# Isabela gov identifies financier of 'jueteng'

**By Melvin Gascon**
*PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ILAGAN, ISABELA—GOV. MARIA Cielo Gracia Padaca on Monday challenged the Philippine National Police to go after a suspected gambling lord who, she said, had been bankrolling the revived operations of "jueteng" in the province.

Quoting reliable sources, Padaca said a certain Jun Roque was allegedly financing the illegal numbers game, which continued to proliferate in various Isabela towns.

Bet collection activities went unabated despite the supposed crackdown launched by a special operations team sent by the PNP chief, Director Gen. Arturo Lomibao.

"It does not matter to me how many thousands or millions of *cobradores* (bet collectors) they get arrested. This thing will not stop unless they get that jueteng lord," she said.

Padaca said she was demanding the immediate relief of Senior Supt. Oscar Fiesta, acting provincial police director, for his supposed failure to meet the one-week period that she gave the police official to stamp out the illegal lottery game.

"I know that Fiesta is in a very difficult situation. In fact, I sympathize with him. But I have to do this because these jueteng financiers and their protectors are not stopping," she said.

The governor earlier expressed disgust over the resurgence of jueteng in Isabela barely two days after Fiesta assumed office as acting provincial director.

She said this bolstered the public perception that the police official brought jueteng with him to the province.

Fiesta could not be contacted through his mobile phone. But in an earlier interview, he denied Padaca's allegation, claiming that since he assumed office, his men had been conducting daily operations against illegal gambling.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, Cagayan Valley police director, said he would not yet recommend Fiesta's relief.

"That would be premature. The (anti-illegal gambling) special operations team is still in Isabela and I would have to wait for its report and evaluate it before I would take action," he said.

Soriano, however, would not confirm Padaca's statement that a certain Jun Roque was financing the jueteng activities here.

"What I read in the news before was that a certain Jun was behind the jueteng activities there. It is difficult to say that it's that person (mentioned by Padaca) because it might turn out to be untrue," Soriano said.

In Nueva Vizcaya, bet collections have continued in at least four towns amid reports that local officials have demanded the return of the illegal numbers game following the failed operation of small town Lottery (STL).

According to sources, the winning number combinations on Sunday were 9-2, 17-36 and 30-32.

Mayors John Severino Bagasao of Bayombong and Ruben Sayo of Aritao, however, were quick to deny the report. Mayors Santiago Dickson of Solano and Pepito Balgos Jr. of Bambang gave no response to the INQUIRER's text messages.

Bishop Ramon Villena declined to issue a statement. However, his staff said he was just awaiting a response after he had notified Malacañang officials about the jueteng problem in Nueva Vizcaya.

Senior Supt. Rogelio Damazo, provincial police chief, however, said he was still waiting for the arrival of the special operations team from Camp Crame that Lomibao had directed to launch a massive operation against jueteng activities.

"We just play a support role. The problem for (the local police) is that we could not find the venues of draws. That is important because we are after (the operators') conviction," he said.

# Leader of signature campaign sees Red in anti-Cha-cha bid

**By Romy G. Amarado**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

DUMAGUETE CITY—THE LEADER of a group pushing for Charter change appears to be taking the Red scare tactic to sell the idea of amending the 1987 Constitution.

He told a crowd, composed mostly of local officials, on Friday that the current system of government was to blame for the economic, political and social crisis that, he said, was favorable to communist guerrillas.

The training and series of consultation on Charter change was spearheaded by the Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines and the Department of Interior and Local Government.

"As they say, this kind of ideology (communism) thrives in a situation where there are a lot of poor people; where there is a lot of corruption, where there is poor basic social services, and that's what we have observed for the last 20 years," Lambino said.

## Economic situation

"The economic situation has become worse. Corruption has gone unabated since 1986. Even the moral values of the people have gone down. And so this is a situation, where such a group like the CPP-NPA (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army) can easily succeed in convincing our people to join their cause," Lambino said.

He went on to give public assurance that, with the parliamentary form of government and other changes in the Constitution, such as allowing 100-percent foreign ownership of businesses, the economy and government of the country would greatly improve, which the communists, he added, did not like.

That was the reason, he said, that communists were the most serious threat to Charter change.

"It is not (former president) Cory Aquino, it is not (Senate President Franklin) Drilon or (former vice president Teofisto) Guingona. It is the communists," Lambino said.

"They (communists) are so aggressive in their efforts to block Charter change. I have not seen such an organized effort from the other opposition groups. Not even from the senators, not even from the other opposition leaders. They are only active in the media," Lambino added.

"Every corner of the archipelago, they are the most vocal opponents of Charter change," he added.

Lambino said the current Constitution allowed communists to be elected through the party-list system, alleging that in the 2004 elections, "six representatives" of the communist-led National Democratic Party were elected.

He did not name the individuals, but he mentioned the party-list groups Bayan Muna, Anak Pawis, Migrante and Gabriela.

"We have already seen that in the last elections. The progressive party-list groups identified with the NDF were able to muster more than two million votes.

## Powerful bloc

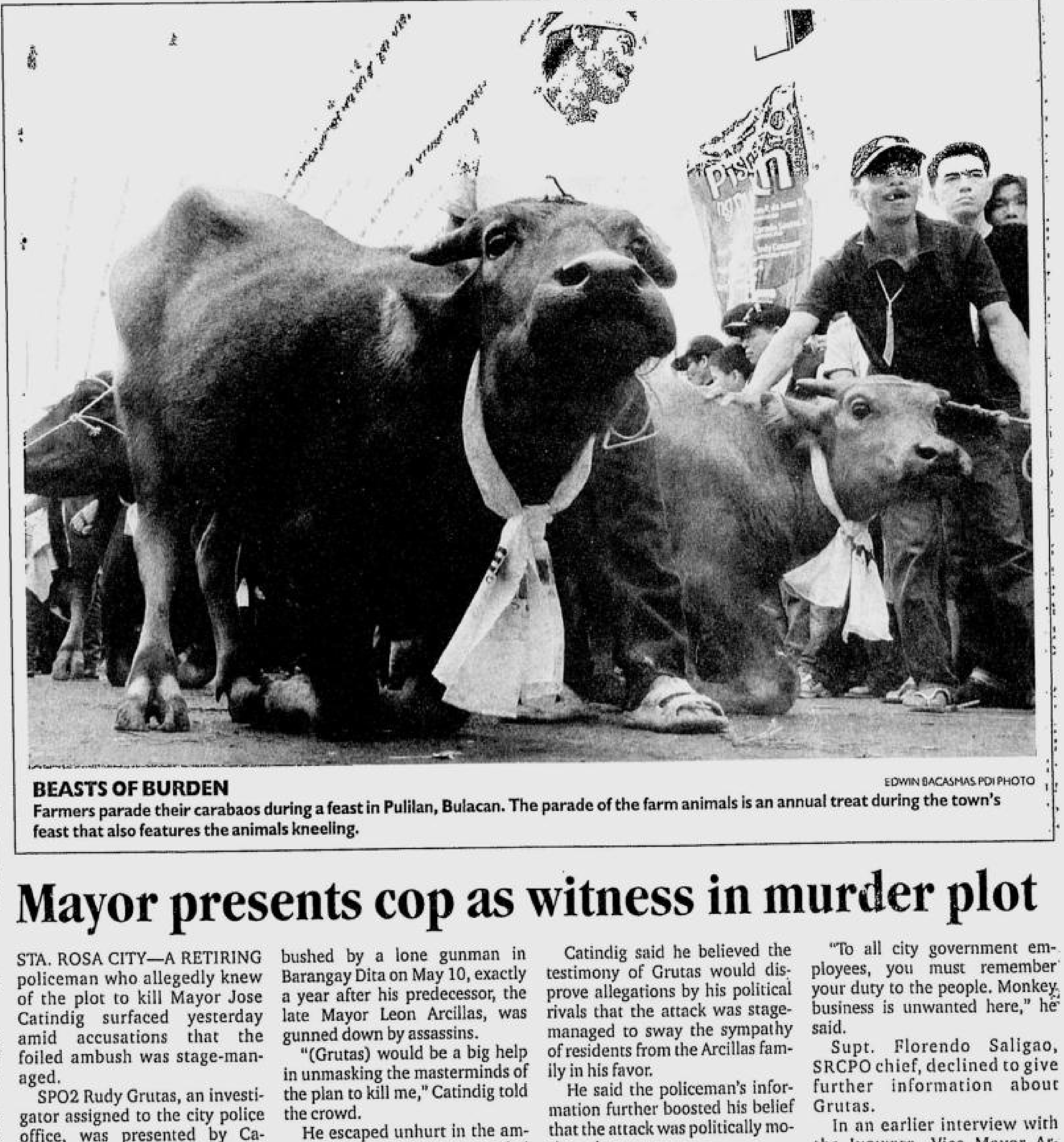
This is a very powerful bloc now in our political system," Lambino said.

He also projected that in the 2007 elections, the number of party-list representatives from the communists would double.

By 2010, Lambino foresees this group to have 24 representatives and, in 2013, to have all party-list seats.

In 2016, he said "they are going to have a president."

"Their organization is so wide all over the country. It crisscrosses the provinces in all sectors—women, youth, academe and government. They are very active," Lambino said.



**BEASTS OF BURDEN**

EDWIN BACASMAS/PDI PHOTO

Farmers parade their carabaos during a feast in Pulilan, Bulacan. The parade of the farm animals is an annual treat during the town's feast that also features the animals kneeling.

# Mayor presents cop as witness in murder plot

STA. ROSA CITY—A RETIRING policeman who allegedly knew of the plot to kill Mayor Jose Catindig surfaced yesterday amid accusations that the foiled ambush was stage-managed.

SPO2 Rudy Grutas, an investigator assigned to the city police office, was presented by Catindig during flag-raising ceremony at the City Hall grounds in Barangay Tagapo.

Speaking before city employees, the mayor said Grutas knew the identities of the five persons who put up P1 million to get him killed.

It was the first time Catindig went public after he was ambushed by a lone gunman in Barangay Dita on May 10, exactly a year after his predecessor, the late Mayor Leon Arcillas, was gunned down by assassins.

"(Grutas) would be a big help in unmasking the masterminds of the plan to kill me," Catindig told the crowd.

He escaped unhurt in the ambush after the bullets intended for him found their mark on a bulletproof vest which he hanged at the window of his vehicle's passenger seat where he was seated.

The mayor said Grutas knew a certain Angie, the supposed handler of his would-be assassins.

Catindig said he believed the testimony of Grutas would disprove allegations by his political rivals that the attack was stage-managed to sway the sympathy of residents from the Arcillas family in his favor.

He said the policeman's information further boosted his belief that the attack was politically motivated.

When asked if the family of Arcillas had a hand in the alleged plot, Catindig promptly declined to comment.

"I cannot answer that question for now. The police are still investigating," he said.

He, however, issued a warning to his political rivals.

"To all city government employees, you must remember your duty to the people. Monkey business is unwanted here," he said.

Supt. Florendo Saligao, SRCPO chief, declined to give further information about Grutas.

In an earlier interview with the INQUIRER, Vice Mayor Arlene Arcillas-Nazareno, the daughter of the late Mayor Arcillas, dismissed allegations linking her family to the ambush of Catindig. She described the charges as "irresponsible and baseless." *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

# Cotabato shedding off kidnapping, crime image

COTABATO CITY—THE CITY is shedding off its bad image with P794 million in fresh investments in the last six months, according to Mayor Muslimin Sema.

Sema said that during the same period, the city had its first huge shopping mall and commercial complex occupying a whole block bounded by two main thoroughfares.

The mayor said that far from its kidnapping past and being a perennial dateline of bad news from elsewhere, the city's good story deserved to be told.

Businessman Pete Marquez said the "dispute of the dateline" between local reporters (for national media organizations) and the business community had to be resolved.

Marquez said crime news reports datelined Cotabato City had tarnished its image before the business communities of other capitals like Manila and Cebu.

Sema said that despite the situation, local holders of national franchises also grew in number. Smaller commercial buildings have been built and paved the way for other businesses, he said.

Sema said he hoped the changes could push the city's present away from its dark past when it was reported that three kidnapping cases took place there in a week.

Pointing to several changes in the economic and infrastructure landscape of the city, Sema reported that a commercial bank had just established its local branch, increasing to 14 the total number of banks with local branches.

The seat of the city government, Sema announced, would be relocated in June to a newly built City Hall—about the size of the Manila City Hall—somewhere south of the city's expansion site in Barangay Malagapas.

Cebu Pacific Airlines, which had just opened a Cotabato-Manila route, is contemplating on opening a Cotabato-Cebu flight, according to its officials.

Senior Supt. Peraco Macacua, city police chief, reported that crime in the city has gone down from 97 from January to March 31, compared to 129 incidents during the same period last year.

"Cotabato City opened its space for economic growth with our time-tested private sector at the helm under a secured atmosphere vigilantly guarded by your city government," Sema said.

He added that new businesses had generated 2,962 jobs and the city's regular employment program had placed 507 jobseekers locally or overseas.

The purchase of real estate, he said, had also risen 157 percent.

In the last five years, local tax collection rose 21 percent to P40.5 million in 2005 from P31.7 million generated in 2001.

Sema said real property tax generation had also increased from P5.8 million in 2003, to P6.3 million in 2004, and P7.2 million last year. *Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

# 6,000 km cross-country in 22 days on a motorbike

> *"Get your motor running,*
> *Head out on the highway,*
> *looking for adventure*
> *And whatever comes our way.*
> *Born to be wild!"*
> –Steppenwolf

ARCHITECT-biker Pedersen

**By Hans Peder Pedersen**

THIS IS A STORY OF A 6,000-KM, 22-day cruise on my Harley Davidson Sportster 1200, across the Philippines from Zamboanga City, and back—via Dapitan, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Surigao, Tacloban and Sorsogon cities, Manila, Subic (Zambales), La Union, Vigan City, Pagudpud (Ilocos Norte), Tugueguerao (Cagayan), Banawe (Ifugao), Baguio City, Manila, Puerto Galera (Oriental Mindoro), Kalibo (Aklan) and Dumaguete City.

For many years, I have traveled in this country on a bike in February, and I've never experienced a single day of rain during those trips. But this year, it was raining when I left Zamboanga in January and was pouring down when I came back in March, and lots of rain along the route.

I passed Southern Leyte a few days before the landslide. Maybe, it was a late La Niña. But in Banawe, the hotel people told me that it was the warmest month they could recall.

Most of the roads are fairly good, some even excellent. Of course, others are bad and a few, real ugly. The worst are the roads in most of Samar, and their terrible state is a crime against the Samareños, as well as travelers.

The first leg to Zamboanga del Norte was a great ride. The road along the northern coast of Mindanao runs close to the sea, sometimes high above and sometimes at sea level—a beautiful section.

All the way to Davao, the roads are of good quality. The newly built stretch from Cagayan de Oro (Misamis Oriental) to Bukidnon via Malaybalay was a very pleasant ride over cool high plains.

As an architect, I had worked on the master plan for Cagayan de Oro and Davao cities 25 years ago, and I wanted to see the development since. Davao has followed up well with infrastructure improvements, such as overpasses, while Cagayan de Oro seems unchanged, with traffic in bad shape.

From the Davao Insular Hotel, I made a day trip to the Pearl Farm on Samal Island. The cottages in architect Francisco Mañosa's distinguished contemporary vernacular style is resort design at its best.

The road from Davao to Surigao and from Tagum to Butuan is under rehabilitation. The bad news is the entire pavement has been removed from a stretch of about 100 km, making it a very unpleasant ride in a bowl of dust and black diesel fumes from buses and trucks.

I missed the ferry in Surigao by 15 minutes due to a change of schedule nobody but the shipping line had heard of. I spent the night in a training center near the pier and got on the early morning ferry to Leyte.

## Black cloud

Every town now has an emission control station. If the black color on my face after a day's ride is any indicator, buses, trucks and jeepneys seem to be exempted from control. But what do I know?

I traveled the Pan Philippine Highway many years ago when it was in very good shape. It will take a lot of work to get the full length in proper condition. I reached Tacloban and checked in at the Leyte Park Hotel where Linda, a one-woman band back after years of performing abroad, gave me the old rock-and-roll routine.

## Roll-on, roll-off

The roro is an exotic experience. You line up at one window to pay the terminal fee, move to the next for a passenger ticket, and to another for a bill of lading for the bike typed carefully with one finger. You proceed to the Port Authority to pay for handling and, finally, to the Coast Guard for a rubber stamp on the registration.

In Surigao, they have added a little humor to this pedestrian procedure. A woman at a table outside the booths collects P50 for the "Barangay Tax." I got a receipt, though.

I started the next day toward Luzon in pouring rain over the impressive San Juanico Bridge and on to Samar—the worst and most dangerous bike ride of the trip. This is the worst road I have ever experienced during years of biking around the world. I made it to Allen with only a slightly damaged shock absorber and got on the roro to Sorsogon for the night.

The ferry trip was rough. Many plastic bags were out to catch lunch. Seasickness seems to be contagious.

## Public transportation

It's always interesting to study the specific, often innovative, local versions of tricycles and bikes. Each area has its own design. In Southern Leyte, I saw bikes with roofs so big and mounted so high that they looked like hand gliders ready for takeoff. One operator recognized the resemblance by calling his unit "Airborne."

I took the 550-km ride from Sorsogon to Manila in one go, stopping only for gas. I was descending from the hills toward Lucena on a meandering road just as sunset painted the landscape red and yellow—a beautiful sight. On the last stretch to Manila, I was all alone on the Skyway and gave the bike full throttle, blasting through the night with Harley rumbling.

I had the bike serviced and got a new tire after the sometimes rough ride. My friend King did the job in his Harley shop "Full Throttle" in Makati. I was ready to go north.

In Subic, I joined up with my old friend, Leo Prieto Jr. He left his Fireblade "crotch rocket" home to test his new BMW R 1200 GS on the trip to Pagudpud. So here we are, two old dudes on different bikes both basically designed more than half a century ago with some evolutionary improvements.

We spent the day at the peaceful, relaxing Mangrove Hotel before riding to Vigan. The coastal road through Zambales and Pangasinan is ideal for biking—long sweeping curves, not much traffic, and a well maintained pavement. Heavy traffic slowed us down in Dagupan City, but we were onto the great ride along the Lingayan Bay to La Union where we spent the night.

Vigan is a fast-growing city. We stayed in the classy Vigan Plaza Hotel at the main plaza. We arrived early in time for an afternoon stroll through the old streets of Spanish colonial houses and a visit to the cathedral.

The ride to Pagudpud was easy. Approaching the northern point of Luzon, we passed a number of sandy coves shaped by powerful waves rolling in from the open sea.

Pagudpud is a serene area with strong, fresh wind and big surfs. After sunset, "the night comes falling from the sky," as Bob Dylan experienced it. A pitch-black sky makes the stars shine as brightly as I have ever seen. The waves thundered against the shore.

Jr. had to return to Manila to take care of business the next morning, and I headed for Tuguegarao and Banawe.

The ride around the northern tip of Luzon offered an exiting experience. At one time, the road is actually on a bridge-like structure between the coast and steep mountain slopes covered with rainforest.

I spent the night in Tuguegarao and continued the ride to Banawe early next morning. The access from Bagabag, Isabela is easy on concrete. A heavy deforestation is prevailing in this area, exposing large denuded mountainsides.

Banawe has not changed much over the last couple of decades. Most of the terraces are still maintained. Many tourists were arriving.

I proceeded to Bontoc on the old dirt road. It was raining since early morning and the track was slippery, making it hard to steer the heavy loaded Harley. It was certainly not an off-roader. On one side, you have a free fall of several hundred meters and on the other, the mountain wall.

It was mainly a ride on first gear. I made the trip, also in heavy rain, 30 years ago on a Juniors Triumph Bonneville.

## Touching the sky

While slowly ascending on the winding road, I suddenly found myself inside a rain-filled cloud. Visibility was only a few meters. No colors but grey, like riding in a black-and-white movie. The mist was sprinkling my face with water, a pleasant cool sensation on the skin. Riding in a cloud felt strange, like touching the sky.

Shortly after starting the descent, a sunbeam cut through the mist and lighted up a strip of the valley below. The shades of green came back and a small triangle of clear blue sky appeared between two mountain peaks—a transition of poetic beauty. The power of the sun gradually took control and revealed the strong sculptured rice terraces in the valley.

It was a slow but scenic ride on a dirt road in Bontoc, Mountain Province. It follows a river with small rice terraces on the brink. Getting closer to Baguio, the traffic increased. Many vegetable trucks were driving like mad on the meandering mountain road, and the situation called for careful, defensive driving.

The entrance to Baguio is a war zone of jeepneys fighting for passengers. I reached the city proper and got gobbled up in the traffic mess and choking polluted air.

## Urban decay

When Baguio was built following Daniel Burnham's plan, it was undoubtedly one of the most beautiful mountain cities in the world. Over the last couple of decades, it has become an example of how bad it can get when there is no development control to match blind greed and shortsightedness. A sad story of a dethroned beauty queen of the mountains turned whore.

I spent some time with old friends before starting my trip back to Zambonga City on the Nautical Highway.

First stop was Manila, where I had another checkup of the Harley for the 1,500-km trip. I took the South Superhighway to Batangas and the roro to Puerto Galera. I spent a day with Jim, who manages the peaceful Coral Cove Diving Resort in Sabang away from the circus in the town itself.

The rain followed me on most of the journey back. I headed for Roxas, where the roro took me to Caticlan. We arrived around 10:30 p.m. and everything was closed. The bike was low on gas but a helpful guy took me to a house where I was able to buy five Coke bottles of premium.

## Little sleep

I reached Kalibo at midnight, looking for a place to get a little sleep after 19 hours of traveling, mostly in heavy rain that made the muscles cold and sore. But as John Mellemcamp sings: "It hurts so good," especially when it was over.

I found the ideal place to sleep where I had to pay only P200 for three hours and P35 for the following hours. I paid for six hours and started early to Iloilo and the roro to Bacolod. I continued to Dumaguete where I arrived at around 8 p.m. after another rainy day on the road.

I spent two days in the city. It's a lively place, especially along the boulevard with its string of cafes. A friend from Zamboanga has a daughter who studies at Silliman University. She was the perfect guide and introduced me to a group of her good friends. We spent a pleasant evening in one of their homes where they served delicious vegetarian supper for me.

I took the 7 a.m. ferry to Dapitan and proceeded to my home in Zamboanga City. It was still raining.

There are many good hotels all over the country. From three- to five-star hotels, whose prices range from P1,200 to P2,700 per night, but all good value for the money in their own right, such as Dakak in Dapitan, Harbor Light Hotel in Cagayan de Oro, Insular Hotel in Davao, Leyte Park Hotel in Tacloban, Mangrove Hotel in Subic, Vigan Plaza Hotel, and Banawe Hotel.

Not in this category is the most expensive room on this nationwide trip in Saud Resort in Pagudpud, where a single traveler is charged P3,550 per night.

As a biker, I love to ride into the unknown, chasing the wind. But it's another story if you are a tourist who wants to plan and budget a vacation. I was part of the team that carried out the "Tourism Masterplan for the Philippines" and can appreciate that angle, too. There is a need for coordinated and currently updated information on schedules and prices (they seem to change frequently). I suggest that the Department of Tourism supplement its travel maps with a website providing this service.

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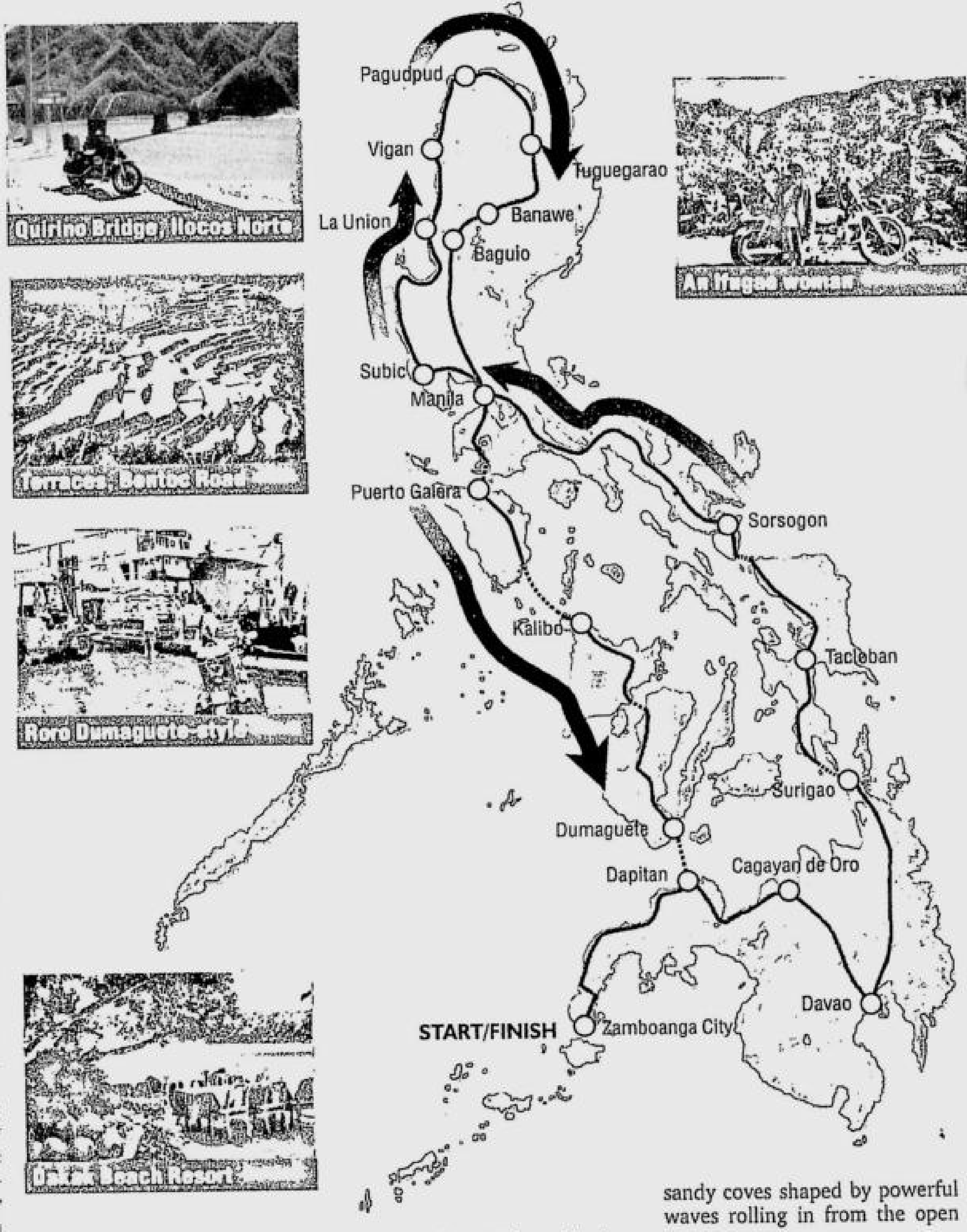
*The author is an architect and senior biker, and a long time resident of Zamboanga City.*



Mayon Volcano
MacArthur landing, Leyte
Davao Pearl Farm

INQGRAPHICS: MARLONE RUBIO AND ERNIE SAMBO

# 'Caloy' toll: 41 dead, 10 missing

**TAAL LAKE.** Storm "Caloy" destroys more than 5,000 fish cages along the 14 coastal towns of Taal Lake sending prices of tilapia plunging to as low as P30 per kilo.

PHOTO BY SID BALATAN / PAHAYAGAN

**By Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Christine O. Avendaño and Christine Gaylican**

TYPHOON "CALOY" LEFT 41 DEAD, 10 MISSING and thousands homeless after it battered six regions of the country, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) reported yesterday.

The Department of Agriculture said Caloy destroyed about P72 million worth of crops, poultry and livestock. *(See related story on Across the Nation page A13)*

Caloy entered the Philippine area of responsibility on May 9 as an active low pressure area east of northern Mindanao. It developed into a tropical depression and then into a tropical storm as it made landfall and crossed Northern Samar on May 12.

It intensified into a typhoon while crossing the South China Sea on May 14.

Of the 41 casualties, 28 drowned after the motor ferry Mae-Ann 5 sank off Masbate at dawn on Friday after the skipper ignored a Coast Guard ban on sea travel. Two passengers were still missing.

Six casualties were reported in Region IV-B (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan); one in the National Capital Region; one in Region IV-A (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), and five in Region VI (Western Visayas).

The Laguna fatality, the NDCC reported, was a boy identified as Louie Rubian of Nagcarlan who was killed after a coconut tree fell on him.

A fisherman identified as Cristituto Bravat reportedly drowned after his boat capsized in Toboso, Negros Occidental, on Friday.

Negros officials reported four other deaths in the region from drownings and electrocution from severed power lines.

Ten persons were still missing: seven in Region IV-A; two in Region V (Bicol) and one in Region VIII (Eastern Visayas).

Fifteen others were reported injured.

The NDCC reported 6,521 houses completely or partially damaged by the typhoon, mostly in the Bicol and Mimaropa regions, as the storm triggered landslides and widespread flooding.

### Power still out

Caloy displaced a total of 53,307 persons or 10,962 families, mostly in Eastern Visayas. As of yesterday, 2,144 persons or 435 families were still at evacuation centers, according to the NDCC.

Electric power was still out in the provinces of Sorsogon, Camarines Sur, except Naga City; Masbate, except Burias Island; Oriental Mindoro and Romblon. Power in Albay has been partially restored.

Communication in the Bicol region was still down due to problems experienced by Bayantel and Digitel.

### GMA assurance

President Macapagal-Arroyo met yesterday with NDCC officials at their office in Quezon City to assess the damage wrought by Caloy.

Lamenting the "trail of destruction" the storm left behind, especially in the wake of the high fuel prices, the President said the "entire disaster response system" had been assembled to attend to the typhoon victims and their communities.

"I assure the people the government will not relent in its relief and rehabilitation efforts until the last beleaguered family is reached and served," the President said in a statement.

Ms Arroyo also assured the public the government would keep the prices of essential goods "stable and steady" and would go after those making money "out of the misfortunes of others."

"We have been through this challenge several times in the past and the Filipino has shown remarkable resiliency to bounce back," the President said.

Caloy ravaged 11,208 hectares in five regions, destroying crops, livestock and poultry worth P72 million, the DA's regional offices reported yesterday.

Agriculture production areas that were affected were in Bataan, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Oriental Mindoro, Albay, Camarines Sur, Sorsogon, Samar and Northern Samar.

### Beneficial to farmers

"The typhoon wrought damage to agriculture, though it is expected to be minimal as areas, particularly those planted to rice and corn, had already been harvested," according to Agriculture Undersecretary for Operations Jesus Emmanuel Paras.

Paras said the rains brought by the typhoon would be beneficial to the farmers, who are now preparing their land for the wet cropping season.

The agency is still sticking to its growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent for the first half of the year in spite of the damage wrought by the typhoon.

The DA had said that farm output, which accounts for a fifth of gross domestic product (GDP), grew 3.9 percent in the first quarter from the same quarter last year as the La Niña weather pattern boosted rice production.

### Victims identified

In the sinking of the Mae Ann 5, the Office of Civil Defense in Bicol said yesterday 21 of the 28 recovered remains had been identified.

They were those of Angeline Tagayom, 4; Jenny Tagayom, 34; Jenelyn Tagayom, 1, and Rey Ermino, 4, all of Zamboanga del Norte; Wilfredo Magdaraog, of Lobrigo Shipping Lines, of Pilar, Sorsogon; Dayday Alburo, 5; Cleofe Alburo, 28; Alexander Alburo, 7; Sophia Maria Hornejos, 5; Richard Verano, 8; Elpidio Quilong-quilong, 62; Beatrice Quilong-quilong, 27; Divine Quilong-quilong, Reymart Verano, 6; Dodong Alburo, Chaway Alburo, Selsa Fajardo and Rey Ann Verano, 10, all of Masbate City; John Michael Arbase, 8; Selma Fajardo and Rosario Avellano, 86, all of Cebu City.

Two passengers were still missing as of yesterday—Geopet Alburo and Dado Alburo.

There were 18 survivors, five of whom were injured. Three of them were identified as Benjamin Fabay, Carlo Daet and Mark Anthony Manrique.

Caloy (international name: Chanchu) is currently over the South China Sea and is expected to hit the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, including Hong Kong and Macau, on Wednesday, Chinese state media said. *With Ephraim Aguilar and Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Maielle Montayre; AFP; Reuters*

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TAX CREDIT SCAM: GOV'T'S FIRST VICTORY

# Court orders Pilipinas Shell to pay P570M in taxes

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE COURT OF TAX APPEALS has ordered Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. to pay the Bureau of Internal Revenue some P570 million worth of tax liabilities, giving the government its first victory in a string of cases involving tax credit fraud.

In a decision penned by Presiding Justice Ernesto Acosta, the court reversed an earlier ruling and said Shell was liable for the taxes because the tax credit certificates (TCCs) that the oil company used to settle its tax obligations in 1998 were fraudulently secured and, therefore, not valid.

The P570 million includes P285.8 million worth of unpaid excise taxes, a 25-percent surcharge and 20-percent annual interest for late payment.

In 1998, Shell used TCCs to settle its excise tax liabilites. Shell claimed that it purchased the TCCs from companies owned by Faustino Chingkoe.

Since the government discovered the use of fraudulently secured TCCs in the late 1990s, Chingkoe has been the government's major suspect in tax credit fraud cases. Chingkoe's companies, including garments firms Diamond Knitting Inc. and Filstar Textile Industrial Corp, allegedly sold numerous TCCs that were fraudulently secured.

A tax credit certificate is an instrument issued by the government to companies that are entitled to tax refunds. Since the processing of refunds take time, the government allows the holders to sell their TCCs to immediately convert these instruments to cash. The buyers can then use the TCCs to pay for their own tax obligations.

Shell said in its defense that it bought the TCCs without knowing that they had been fraudulently obtained. Shell said it was itself a victim and should therefore be free of liability.

The oil company said that the fact that the BIR accepted the TCCs as payment for its tax obligations in 1998 should have cleared it of its tax obligation.

But the court did not accept Shell's argument, saying, "The respondent was negligent in obtaining the TCCs involved considering that it failed to investigate the validity of the TCCs."

The court said its 1999 decision in favor of Shell did not take into consideration the fact that TCCs used for tax payments were subject to post-audit. The court, therefore, said the government had the authority to cancel payments when TCCs used to settle the tax obligations were found to be worthless.

"Payment can only occur if the instrument used to discharge an obligation represented its stated value. A valueless instrument, even if delivered to and accepted by the creditor, not knowing that the same is worthless, would not produce payment," the court said.

According to the One-Stop Shop Duty and Drawback Center (OSS), a body tasked with issuing TCCs, the P570-million tax case against Shell was one of four major TCC-related cases involving Shell and Petron Corp. that were filed with the tax court. The three other cases—another one against Shell and two others against Petron—are still pending.

The BIR's victory over Shell came after a series of dismissal of similar cases last year filed by other government agencies. The dismissals prompted the Senate to conduct an inquiry amid suspicion that some officials were conniving with tax cheats.

An OSS officials said the BIR's victory over Shell could set a precedent and boost the government's efforts taxes lost to tax-credit fraud. Government estimates that it lost over P5 billion in potential tax collection in the late 1990s due to the use of fake and fraudulently obtained TCCs.

The official said the BIR is expected to immediately collect the P570 million from Shell, unless the oil company appeals the decision to a higher court.

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# *Palace not meddling in judicial matters on Erap's case, says Bunye*

**By Gil Cabacungan**

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY declared it had never intervened in judicial matters and it was not about to intercede for deposed President Joseph Estrada to have him wait out his trial at his home.

"President Arroyo has never negotiated with or pressured any court of law and will never do so for any reason," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

Bunye was reacting to a plea by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. to have Estrada placed under house arrest while on trial on plunder charges. Pimentel called attention to the case of former Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao governor Nur Misuari whom a Makati City regional trial court allowed to be placed under house arrest while his rebellion case was being heard.

"We are all for the proper respect and humanitarian consideration for the former president, but the decision on whether house arrest would be granted lies entirely on the Sandiganbayan," Bunye said.

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# Number coding phaseout looms

## Plan to affect 3 Metro Manila cities

SCENES like this rarely happen in three Metro cities which have requested for a permanent lifting of the number coding scheme. DENNIS SABANGAN

**By Leila B. Salaverria**

IT WAS SUSPENDED IN MOST PARTS OF Metro Manila during the summer, but the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program (UVVRP), also known as the number coding scheme, may be phased out for good in several cities.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando yesterday said he was looking into the possibility of lifting the UVVRP in certain areas located at the perimeter of the metropolis, as requested by their officials.

He said the mayors of Malabon, Muntinlupa and Pateros have asked him to exempt them from the number-coding scheme as vehicular traffic was not that heavy in their areas.

The UVVRP is not being implemented in the cities of Pasig and Marikina because being at the fringes of the metropolis, both areas are not prone to heavy traffic.

Under the UVVRP, vehicles are banned from going out on the road on a particular day of the week depending on the last digit of their license plate.

"We are seriously considering removing that in perimeter cities," Fernando told reporters at the Kapihan sa Manila forum. "I will present the idea to the Metro Manila Council when we meet this month."

The council, which is chaired by Fernando, is composed of mayors of the 17 cities and municipalities in the metropolis. It approves ordinances and resolutions affecting the whole of Metro Manila.

The MMDA suspended the UVVRP in Metro Manila, except for Makati City, from April 6 to June 2, on the premise that since there were no classes, it could afford to allow more vehicles to go out on the road without drastically hampering traffic flow.

Fernando said that without the number coding in some cities, vehicle owners need not travel during the window hours, the period when vehicles banned from traveling for that day could still go out on the road.

The window hours are from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m, except in the cities of Makati and Pasay.

WHAT'S INSIDE
- Navy Inspector General's Fort Bonifacio house razed /A18
- Swiss hotel F&B exec found dead in garage /A18

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# Statuesque psychology grad crowned Miss RP-Earth

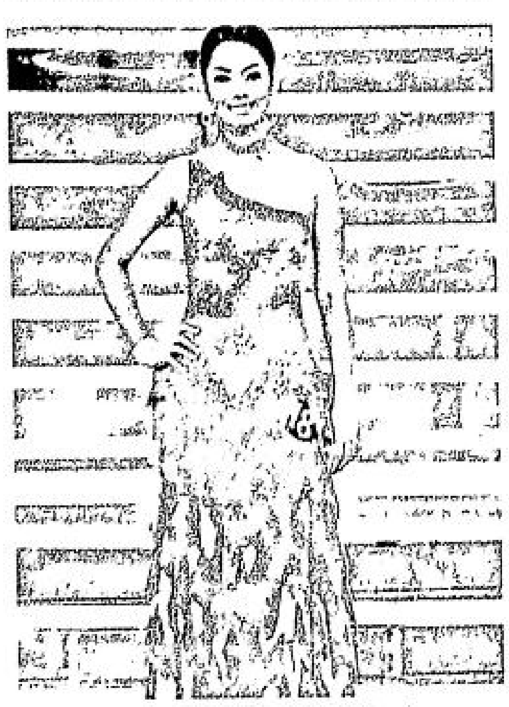
**By Armin Adina**

NOVICE PAGEANT CONTENDER CATHERINE Untalan proved that height is an advantage as she beat 23 others for the Miss Philippines-Earth crown in ceremonies held at a jam-packed UP Theater in Quezon City last Sunday.

Untalan, a fresh Psychology graduate from the University of the Philippines, was the tallest candidate at six feet. She was crowned by outgoing queen Gennebelle Raagas, who herself was the tallest candidate in her batch last year at 5-foot-10.

When asked how she wanted to be recognized internationally, Untalan said she aspired "to be the first Filipino to be crowned Miss Earth."

No Filipino woman has ever won in the international pageant's six-year history. It will be held outside the Philippines for the first time this year. Chile will be the host country for the 2006 beauty extravaganza. The pageant aims to preserve and conserve the bounties of Mother Nature.



**SIX-FOOT tall Miss Philippines-Earth Catherine Untalan during coronation night at the UP Theater.** RODEL ROTONI

Crowd favorite Ginger Conejero, who represented the Filipino community in the United States, was proclaimed Miss Philippines-Air, the pageant's equivalent of first runner up. She was also Miss Photogenic.

This year, pageant organizer Carousel Productions opened the competition to women of Filipino descent who are based in other parts of the world.

Conejero, who holds a political science degree from the University of Southern California, was crowned Miss Fiesta Filipina-San Francisco in 2004.

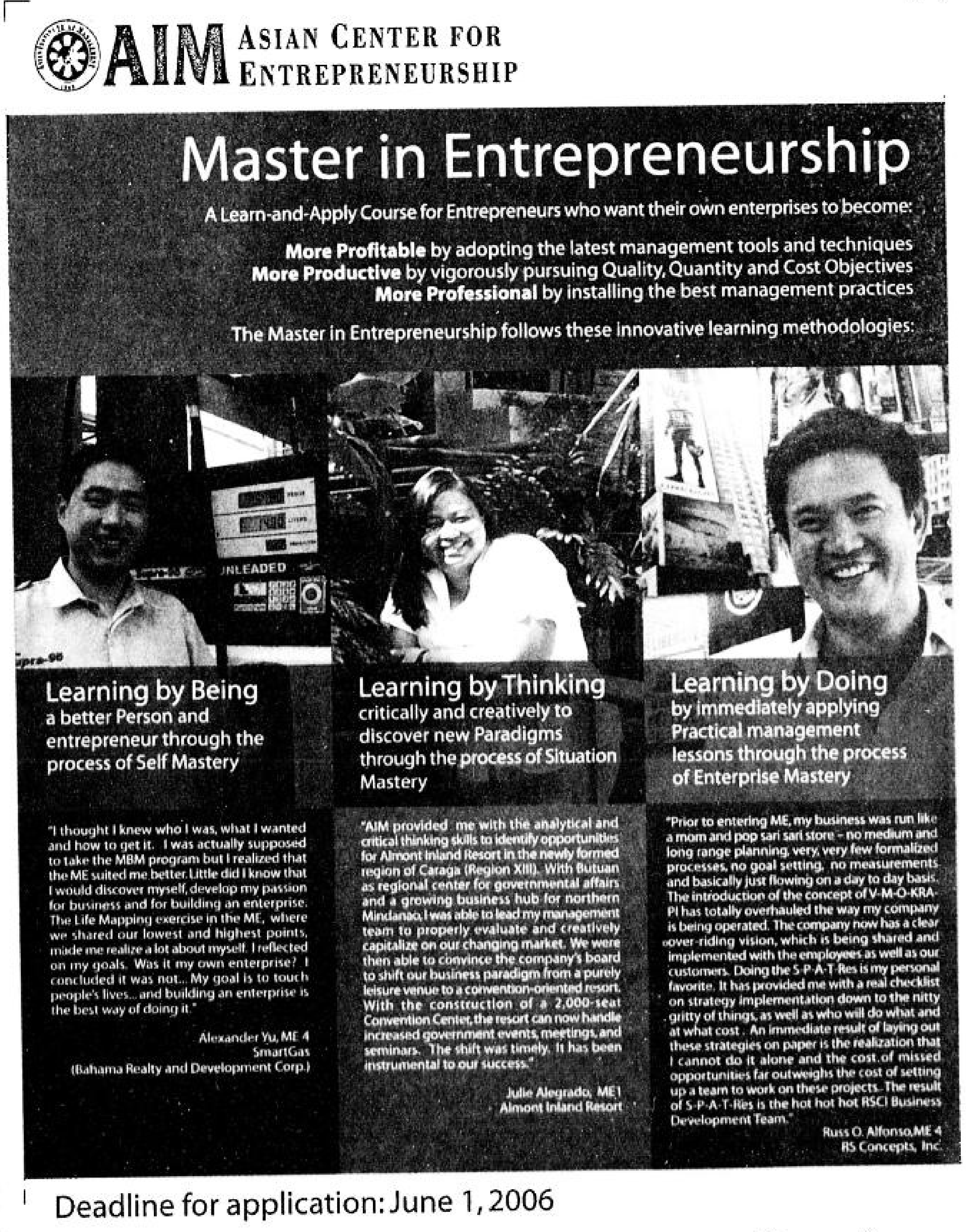
Katrina Rigets placed third and was crowned Miss Philippines-Water. Central Luzon's Francis Dianne Cervantes was Miss Philippines-Fire (fourth place) while a visibly shocked Reena Sarmiento, who came all the way from Canada, was Miss Philippines-Ecotourism.

The winners were selected by an all-woman judging panel which included Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco, fashion designer Lulu Tan-Gan, international theater performer Isay Alvarez, former beauty titlists Evangeline Pascual, Mutya Laxa and Michelle Aldana, equestrienne Toni Leviste and society editor Baby Cruz.

Other awardees were Southern Tagalog's Faith Averie Mercado, Best in Swimsuit; Jacqueline Boquiron, Best in Long Gown; Western Mindanao's Chrismin Anne Lim, Best in Cultural Attire; Bicol Region's Arianne Veneracion, Miss Talent; and Andrea Dimalanta, Miss Friendship.

The pageant started with a visual spectacle as the winners and runners up danced with outgoing titleholders and the 24 official candidates while hosts Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby sang Kamikaze's hit "Darna."

Video jock Derek Ramsey shared hosting chores with Pascual and Milby. The pageant was aired over ABS-CBN and will have replays on TFC.



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EQUIS ACCREDITED

# Navy officer's house razed in Fort Boni

By Jocelyn R. Uy
and Dona Pazzibugan

AN HOUR-LONG FIRE GUTTED the house of the Navy Inspector General at the Bonifacio Naval Station in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, early yesterday morning.

Rear Adm. Rogelio Calunsag, his wife and two children were unhurt although they lost P3 million worth of property and valuables in the fire which started at around 6 a.m.

The fire broke out after the Navy leadership had served eviction notices on 56 retired Navy and Marine officers who have been overstaying in their quarters in the same compound. Officials, however, were quick to rule out arson.

Navy spokesperson Capt. Geronimo Malabanan said the fire "is not connected" to the planned eviction of the officers on Saturday.

"There is no possibility of arson. The place is a secluded area," said Senior Insp. Virgilio dela Paz, Taguig City fire marshal.

"The initial information we got is that the fire was caused by an unattended lit candle. The family was using the candle because there has been no electricity there since Saturday because of the storm "Caloy," Malabanan said.

Among those who face eviction are three former Navy flag officers in command: Vice Admirals Ernesto De Leon, Victorino Hinco and Mariano Dumancas; and former Marine commandants, Lieutenant Generals Edgardo Espinosa and Emmanuel Teodosio.

De Leon, who retired last December, has been appointed ambassador to Australia.

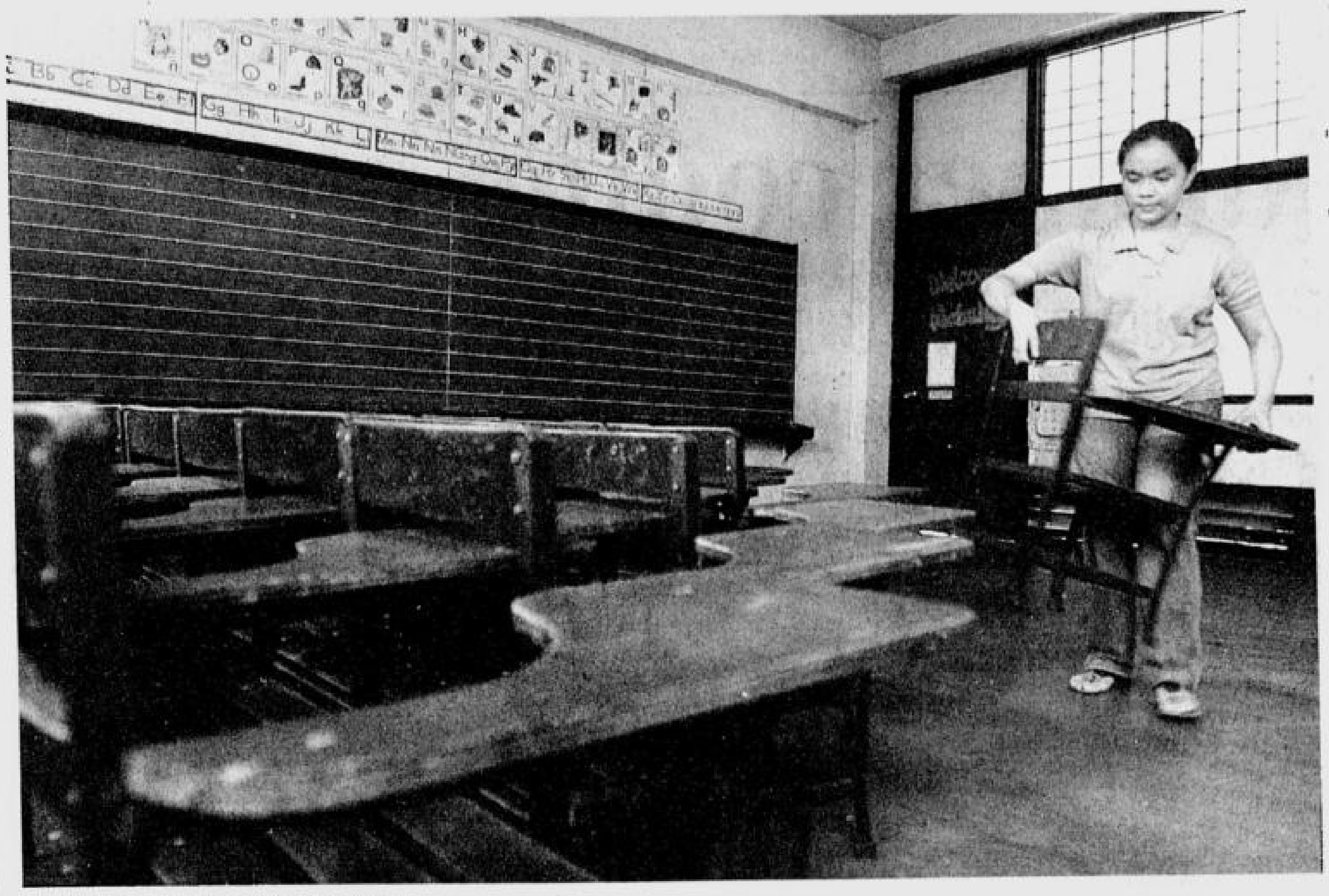
The rest of those to be evicted consist of seven rear admirals or major generals; 28 commodores or brigadier generals; 15 navy captains or colonels; and one police chief superintendent.

The Navy leadership has been trying to regain control of the Bonifacio Naval Station from retired senior officers who have refused to move out.

Navy Flag Officer in Command Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga was supposed to serve the "final notice of eviction" himself last Friday, but excused himself at the last minute due to a "conference."

In an interview over radio dzRH yesterday, Mayuga appealed to his former superiors, whom he addressed as "sirs," to vacate the quarters which were meant for senior officers still in active duty.

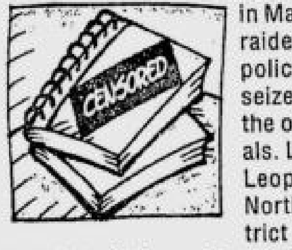
The retired officers secured an injunction from the Court of Appeals in 1994 against their eviction. They claimed that they have secured a title for the land, which the government claimed was spurious.



**READY FOR SCHOOL OPENING**
A volunteer in this year's Brigada Eskwela program arranges chairs at the Junto Lukban Elementary School in Paco, Manila. Teachers, students and their parents are joining hands nationwide to fix up classrooms in preparation for next month's opening of classes. RYAN LIM

## METROBRIEFS

### For adults only



A PAPER factory that manufactures supposedly obscene notebooks in Malabon City was raided yesterday, but police managed to seize only a handful of the offending materials. Led by Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Northern Police District director, the raid started at a little past 3 p.m. inside Keng Hua Paper Products at 1000 Gov. W. Pascual Avenue in Potrero. At first, there appeared to be no sign of the notebooks, which reportedly feature on its covers half-naked men and women in intimate poses. But police finally managed to find three notebooks with "obscene" inside covers at the sample area. Operatives of the Malabon police criminal investigation and detection group conducted the raid on the strength of a search warrant issued by Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Antonio Eugenio. Bataoil said the police had "sufficient evidence" to pin down the factory owners, who would be charged with violating Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code, which penalizes the publication of pornographic materials. *DJ Yap*

### Swiss found dead in car

WAS it murder or suicide? Police are waiting for an autopsy report to shed light on the death of Swiss national Thomas Naegeli, whose body was found inside his car yesterday morning. "We cannot give any comment yet on whether it was suicide or if there was foul play. We have to wait for the result of the autopsy," Makati Police chief Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio told the Inquirer. Naegeli, 40, the food and beverage director of the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City, was found at around 6 a.m. yesterday in the backseat of his silver Honda CRV (BDW 500). The vehicle was parked in the garage of his home on Edades Street in San Lorenzo Village, Makati City. Initial investigation showed that at around 4 a.m., Naegeli told his wife, Martina, that he was going out. When she found him in the garage two hours later, she called a friend who alerted security guards in the village about the incident. Police said Naegeli had a black black pouch bag over his head. A tube had been inserted into the vehicle's exhaust pipe, with the other end placed inside the car, which was still running when the police arrived at the scene. Naegeli had locked the car doors and had also sealed the rear door of the vehicle with tape as if to make the interior airtight. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

# Sampaloc tops flood prone area list

By Leila B. Salaverria

RESIDENTS OF SAMPALOC, MANILA, brace yourselves. The area is expected to be the most affected by floods when the rainy season begins, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday.

"The worst area for flooding is the Sampaloc area, near the University of Santo Tomas," Fernando told reporters at the Kapihan sa Manila forum.

He listed the other flood-prone areas as Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela and Araneta Avenue in Quezon City.

According to Fernando, the MMDA is finding it hard to eliminate flooding along España in Sampaloc because rehabilitating its drainage system, which cannot handle the volume of rainfall, would be very expensive.

Another problem is the presence of informal settlers who live alongside the waterways in the area, he added.

Fernando said he has proposed installing a pipe that would pump out the floods in Sampaloc, directly to the Manila Bay.

Sampaloc is home to the university belt, where several schools like UST, the Far Eastern University, University of the East and Centro Escolar University are located.

Fernando, however, expects flooding in the metropolis to be less worse compared to last year. Instead of neck-high floods, the MMDA chair has predicted waist-high water levels for this year.

He pointed out that from the time the MMDA took over flood control functions in 2002, flooding in Metro Manila has been reduced by about 70 percent.

Fernando attributed this to the repair and deployment of various equipment used to clean and declog waterways and pump out floodwaters.

He cited Araneta Avenue, which he said used to experience deep floods during heavy rains.

"From neck high, the flood waters there are now only waist high. We have removed an old water pipe that used to hinder the water's passage to the San Juan river," Fernando said.

He added that all throughout the dry months, MMDA personnel have been cleaning waterways to ensure minimal flooding. A standby crew is also ready at all times to clear clogged canals or drainage systems.

# Mom files child abuse raps vs teacher

By DJ Yap

THE MOTHER OF A SEVEN-YEAR-old boy has charged a teacher in a Quezon City school with child abuse for allegedly pinching and hitting her son with a stick as punishment for his disruptive behavior in class.

The mother accused Leah Lyn Morauda, a grade school teacher at the Covenant Presbyterian Learning Center in Barangay Holy Spirit, of violating Republic Act 7610 in a complaint filed in the Quezon City prosecutor's office.

But school administrator Robert Fabia, who was also named in the complaint, defended the teacher, saying the punitive measures were justified since the boy was hard to "control."

In the complaint, the boy's mother said Morauda hurt her son on at least two occasions in November 2005 and March 2006. The mother said she saw bruises on the boy's arm on March 3. The boy later told her that Morauda had pinched him repeatedly.

The woman added that a similar incident occurred in November last year, when the teacher allegedly hit her son with a thick wooden stick on the chest.

She said she reported both incidents to Fabia, but the school official took the teacher's side, arguing that her son could be suffering from attention deficit disorder. The woman added that Fabia had even said her son need not attend classes from March 13 to 17 but should just return on March 20 to 22 to take his final exams.

Fabia told the INQUIRER that the boy often bullied his classmates by punching and hitting them. He added that the teacher had admitted to hitting the boy but had asked to be forgiven by the mother.

**FREE HEARING TEST**
Mandaluyong City residents will soon be able to have their hearing tested for free through a project of the City Health Department, American Hearing Center and Manila Hearing Aid.

# 2-year-old girl survives drop from 3rd floor

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A TWO-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS LISTED IN critical condition in a hospital after she was allegedly dropped from the third floor of a house in Taguig City on Sunday by her nanny's former boyfriend.

SPO1 Conrad Mapili, case officer, said the girl was being treated at the Philippine General Hospital for head injuries and lacerations.

The victim was playing on the terrace when the suspect, Marciano Garrado allegedly picked her up and dropped her from the third floor of the victim's house in Purok 4, Barangay Lower Bicutan, Mapili told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The 67-year-old Garrado, at that time, was visiting the girl's nanny, Teresita Tayobong, to win her back, police said.

"According to the suspect, Tayobong gave him the cold shoulder. So apparently, he did it to get her attention. We can't see any other motive behind the incident," Mapili added.

The incident was witnessed by Rodel, Tayobong's stepson, who also worked for the girl's family.

According to Mapili, Rodel said he saw Garrado pick up the child but, he paid no attention to it because he thought the suspect just wanted to let the child sit on his lap.

Garrado allegedly tried to escape after the incident but Rodel chased him and turned him over to barangay watchman. The suspect was later brought to the police headquarters.

The girl's mother, who was busy tending their store on the first floor, told the police she heard a loud thud outside the house. When she went out to check the source of the sound, she saw her daughter lying on the ground.

The girl's parents said they would file charges of frustrated murder against Garrado in the city prosecutor's office. They were supposed to file the case yesterday but they could not leave the hospital as their daughter was in critical condition.

"The mother said the child was already having a hard time breathing," Mapili said.

The child crashed into a shrub before she fell to the ground, hitting her head on the pavement, he added.

# Smear campaign vs DepEd boss

**ON TARGET**
*Ramon Tulfo*

SOMEBODY AT THE DEPARTment of Education (DepEd) is trying to destroy the good name of its officer-in-charge, Fe Hidalgo, through a cheap shot.

I don't know Ms Hidalgo. But I was told she's as honest and clean as a dyed-in-the-wool educator should be.

Hidalgo is being linked to an alleged bribery case involving a supplier of instant noodles, biscuits and powdered milk in connection with the department's bidding for its health and nutrition program.

A certain Evangeline Benitez, supposedly a Quezon City businesswoman, had accused Hidalgo and other DepEd officials of receiving bribes from a long-time food supplier.

What did Hidalgo do to merit the accusation? She reset the May 4 bidding to May 18 to iron out kinks raised during the pre-bidding.

A source at the DepEd says an official below the rank of undersecretary is behind the smear campaign against Hidalgo.

The motive? The backbiting official wants to take over Hidalgo's post.

* * *

**That DepEd official is not setting a good example for impressionable schoolchildren and high school and college students.**

**When it's their turn to hold responsible positions, expect the children and young adults to engage in office intrigues or lie to get to the top.**

* * *

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay has indicated he would be gone for a while to escape an alleged assassination plot against him.

But an insider told me Binay is not scared for his life. I believe the insider since I know Binay from way back when I was covering the police beat and he was still a human rights lawyer. Being scared of bodily harm is not part of the small-but-terrible guy's vocabulary.

Binay's reason for taking a leave is that he is allegedly quite sick and needs treatment. The source mentioned his sickness, but I don't want to repeat it in this column.

I wish the Makati mayor a speedy recovery.

Although I'm his critic, I acknowledge the very good things he has done for his constituents.

He has built a modern hospital that gives free treatment and medicines to the city's poor. He has improved traffic in the once-chaotic streets of Makati. He has given importance to the city's senior residents by requiring all business establishments to give them discounts for their medicines, food and entertainment.

Not one of Binay's predecessors—including my idol, the late Nemesio Yabut—has done what he has done for the city's residents.

* * *

**A customs policeman, who is assigned at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), is reportedly engaged in the "swing" of cargoes coming out of the premier airport.**

**"Swing" is customs term for taking out a shipment from the customs zone without paying taxes and duties.**

**The customs cop is bold enough to do what he does because he reportedly has a brother who is a key customs official at the main office in the South Harbor.**

* * *

I agree with Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, President Macapagal-Arroyo's economic adviser, for its poor collections last month, changing the leadership at the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) should be an option. The BIR was short by P10 billion of its target collection for April.

In short, kick out BIR Commissioner Jose Marie Bunag and other officials holding key positions.

Replace Bunag with somebody who's incorruptible and who knows the inner workings at the premier revenue collection agency.

# Climate change seen killing millions in Africa

LONDON—DISEASE SPREAD BY global warming could kill an extra 185 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by the end of the century and turn millions more into refugees unless rich nations take action now, a report said on Monday.

Christian Aid said rich developed countries had to end their dependence on fossil fuels and set aside large sums of aid to help poorer nations ride out the worst impacts of global warming and switch to energy sources like wind, solar and waves.

"Rich countries must take responsibility for having largely created this problem—and cut $CO_2$ emissions radically," the nongovernmental organization said in a report "The Climate of Poverty: facts, fears and hopes."

"Climate change is taking place and will inevitably continue. Poor people will take the brunt, so we are calling on rich countries to help them adjust as the seas rise, the deserts expand, and floods and hurricanes become more frequent and intense."

Most scientists agree that global warming is due to burning fossil fuels for transport and power, and new calculations suggest that having risen by 0.6 degrees Celsius in the 20th century, global temperatures could surge three degrees by 2100.

Christian Aid said it based its estimate of 185 million deaths due to disease on figures from the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Global warming should allow carriers like mosquitoes to expand their ranges.

Melting ice caps and glaciers were not only eroding coast lines at a rapid rate but were also raising sea levels and reducing reliable sources of fresh water.

At the same time changing weather patterns were increasing the incidence of floods and droughts, with arid regions becoming drier and wet regions getting wetter.

These changes would increase tensions as key resources like water and fertile land became more scarce, the religious charity said, noting the farmers in northern Kenya were fighting over a diminishing number of waterholes. to feed their cattle.

"The unfolding disaster in east Africa, where 11 million people have been put at risk of hunger by years of unprecedented drought, is a foretaste of what it is to come," the report said.

"In this sense, the environment is too important to be left to the environmentalists," Christian Aid said, declaring that it was switching its campaign goals to focus on the four great effects of global warming—pestilence, floods, famine and war.

The Kyoto Protocol is the only global vehicle for cutting carbon emissions, but it expires in 2012, the world's worst polluter, the United States, rejects it and it does not commit the major developing nations to make any reductions. *Reuters*

# Fresh violence kills 19 in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO—AT LEAST 19 PEOPLE have been killed in fresh violence in Sri Lanka, officials said Sunday, as Tamil Tigers vowed a "war" to deploy their navy even though truce monitors say it violates a ceasefire.

Thirteen of the victims were gunned down in separate incidents in the northern islet of Kayts on Saturday night, the military said. Two more people were killed in the restive northeastern port district of Trincomalee.

Another two were gunned down at Atchchuvely in the northern Jaffna peninsula, police said. On Sunday, a soldier was killed when suspected Tigers lobbed grenades at troops, the military said, adding that it retaliated and killed one of the attackers.

Authorities were investigating if the killings were linked to the ongoing Tamil separatist conflict amid a spate of tit-for-tat attacks in the north and east in recent weeks.

More than 200 people have died in clashes over the past month despite a four-year truce between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in an ethnic conflict that has claimed over 60,000 lives since 1972.

President Mahinda Rajapakse, 60, said in an interview with the island's Sunday Times that the government is still committed to a four-year ceasefire. However, he said he ordered recent air attacks against rebel positions as "preventive action to avert another war." *AFP*

# *Indonesia's Mount Merapi erupts with hot gas, ash*

**MOUNT** Merapi, one of Indonesia's most dangerous volcanoes, churns out hot smoke from Muntlian near Yogyakarta in Central Java, May 15. AFP

MOUNT MERAPI, INDONESIA—Indonesia's Mount Merapi volcano erupted with clouds of hot gas and rained ash on surrounding areas on Monday, sending some nearby villagers who had been reluctant to leave scurrying for safety.

Grey ash covered crop fields and hundreds of rooftops in the area of Ketep, 10 km from the base of the mountain, and many houses appeared deserted after residents evacuated.

Not everyone was gone, however. Some people cleaned ashes off their houses and others opened shops, while commercial mini-buses continued to run.

As ash rained down on villages around the mountain, schoolchildren in uniform hurried to class, covering their noses and mouths.

The mountain "has exploded already," the head of the Merapi section at the Center of Volcanological Research and Technology in Yogyakarta told Reuters.

He cautioned, however, that Merapi's eruption process could be gradual rather than a sudden burst, and that the massive eruption scientists fear had yet to come.

The top of Merapi was totally obscured by thick grey and white clouds, which trailed down the volcano's slopes.

"This morning it was like dusk. The village was quite dark," Mariadi, 25, said. "The ashes were pouring in for one hour," he said, adding that villagers did not panic. *Reuters*

# No militarization along border, Bush assures Mexico

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT George W. Bush assured Mexican President Vicente Fox on Sunday he did not intend to militarize their countries' mutual border, but was considering sending National Guard troops there to temporarily support border control efforts.

"The president made clear that the United States considers Mexico a friend and that what is being considered is not militarization of the border, but support of border patrol capabilities on a temporary basis by National Guard personnel," White House spokesperson Maria Tamburri said, describing a telephone conversation between Bush and his Mexican counterpart.

Fox "reached out" to Bush on Sunday to relay his concerns about the plan that is under consideration, Tamburri said.

Bush will deliver a televised address to the nation on immigration on Monday evening. The White House said last week he may propose deploying more National Guard troops along the 3,200-km border to stop illegal immigration.

Fox's office said during the call Bush said the United States and Mexico were partners and friends, but a thorough immigration reform was needed to solve the problem between both countries.

The idea has also gotten a mixed reception on Capitol Hill, where some senators are worried that the National Guard is already stretched too thin to take on major additional duties.

White House National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley went on television Sunday to emphasize that no final decision on sending the troops had been made. He said the idea was to "provide a bit of a stopgap as the Border Patrol build up their capacity to deal with this challenge.

"This is something that's actually already being done.

It's not about militarization of the border," Hadley said on CNN's "Late Edition." *Reuters*

# Chad's Deby clinches new term

**DEBY** casting vote May 3. AFP

N'DJAMENA—CHAD'S PRESIDENT Idriss Deby won presidential elections with 77.5 percent of the vote, electoral officials said on Sunday, handing him a third five-year term in the central African oil-producing country.

Despite a rebel attack on the capital N'Djamena three weeks before the May 3 polls, Deby's re-election was widely considered a formality after opposition parties boycotted the ballot, calling it a farce.

"Given the results, candidate Idriss Deby Itno has won the presidential elections," said Ahmat Mahamat Bachir, head of the Independent National Election Commission. Chad's highest court has two weeks to confirm the commission's announcement.

Western diplomats had reported low and unenthusiastic voter participation, but Bachir said turnout had been 61 percent.

Deby also won polls in 1996 and 2001, but his rule has been weakened by high-level desertions and he faces guerrillas led by former allies who accuse him of being corrupt and dictatorial.

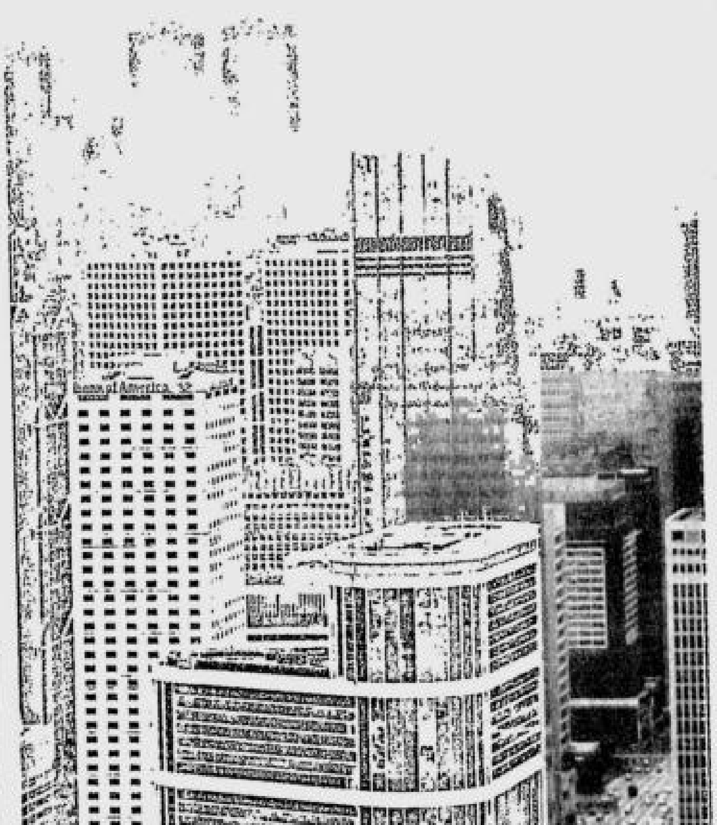
The opposition has accused France, which has about 1,300 troops stationed in Chad and provides military intelligence to the government, of interfering to keep Deby in power. France has said it is supporting a democratically elected government.

Opposition groups and some foreign governments had lobbied Deby to postpone the May 3 elections and open a dialogue with his opponents.

"This is a victory for the Chadian people," Deby told supporters and reporters at his private residence in N'Djamena.

"It is also a rebuttal to all those people who said Chad was going to explode," he said.

The rebels who launched the April 13 attack on N'Djamena, in which hundreds of people were killed, have rejected an offer of dialogue from Deby and have vowed to unite with other groups to end his 16-year rule. *Reuters*



**POLLUTED HONG KONG**

**A haze of pollution hovers over Hong Kong, May 15. About 2,000 factories along the Pearl River Delta face closure or relocation orders because of environmental hazards.** AFP

# *That Southwest attendant may be a millionaire*

DALLAS—TO EARN HIS PAY, Mike Mitchel collects boarding passes and helps passengers onto airplanes. At age 56, he lives with his mother, takes a yearly vacation to Las Vegas when the room rates are cheapest and counts movies and music CDs as extravagances.

But as one of the 17 remaining active employees who helped start Southwest Airlines 35 years ago, he is rich. Quite rich. A beneficiary of Southwest's profit-sharing program—like all the airline's regular employees—he owns about 50,000 shares of Southwest stock, valued at roughly $800,000. And that's just a quarter of a portfolio that easily makes Mitchel a multimillionaire.

But for Mitchel and his Southwest colleagues from the first days—eight flight attendants, five operations workers and four executives, each a millionaire—it's not about the money. Ask them why they stick around and they mention frugality, pride in earning their keep. And they say they simply like to work.

Southwest has always taken an underdog attitude. And early on, at least, the company actually was an underdog. It took four years from incorporation to the airline's first flight in 1971, largely because other airlines sued to prevent Southwest from operating.

Southwest's scrappy lawyer at the time, Herb Kelleher, is now its renowned chairman. And perhaps one of his greatest accomplishments was an ability to keep Southwest workers thinking like underdogs—despite the fact that the company now essentially dictates fares to the rest of the industry and has a stock market value nearly as big as all the other domestic airlines combined. *NYT*

# Couples flock to US for luxury of being able to pick baby's sex

**By Marc Lavine**

LOS ANGELES—CANADIAN Melissa Vatkin has joined thousands of couples flocking to the United States to cash in on the disputed luxury of being able to dictate the sex of their next baby.

Parents from around the world are forking out around $19,000 for a groundbreaking gender selection treatment offered by only a handful of US clinics but banned in most countries.

The high-tech method of resolving the ancient question of "Would we prefer a boy or a girl?" has raised ethical concerns and fears that it could worsen an already worrying gender imbalance plaguing countries such as China and India.

But for couples like the Vatkins, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD, which proponents boast gives parents a 99-percent certainty of delivering a baby of the sex of their choice, the procedure is a godsend.

"This treatment has allowed us to realize our dream," said 36-year-old Vatkin, who recently gave birth to her fourth child, a pre-selected girl.

"We were desperate to have another girl and our daughter really wanted a sister," said Vatkin, who also has a 6-year-old daughter and two boys, aged 4 and 2, with her husband Shawn, an oil company owner.

"It was important for us to balance our family," added the resident of British Columbia.

Family balancing is the refrain heard from most of the 2,000 couples who have sought the help of fertility expert Dr. Jeffrey Steinberg, who became a pioneer in the field of commercial gender selection about three years ago.

"Usually these couples have four of five children of one sex and desperately want one of the opposite sex, they want to balance their families in a way that works for them," Steinberg told AFP.

For more than two years, the Vatkins, children in tow, made the 2,100-kilometer pilgrimage from their home to Steinberg's Fertility Institute in Los Angeles in a bid to overcome their fertility problems and to ensure that when the baby did come, it would be a girl.

Other couples come from much further afield. More than 50 per cent of the couples that come to Steinberg for help are from outside the United States. *AFP*

# The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

# WHO: 3,300 die daily in West Pacific

MANILA—THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION on Monday said it was alarmed by figures showing that over 3,300 people in the Western Pacific region die daily of road traffic accidents, suicide, drowning and other injury-related deaths.

The WHO said in a statement that an estimated five million people die every year worldwide from injury-related deaths, including 1.2 million annually in the Western Pacific region—or nearly 3,330 deaths daily.

The Western Pacific covers 48 countries and territories including Australia, the Pacific island countries, Japan, Korea, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

The major injury-related causes of deaths in the region are suicide, which claims 343,000 lives yearly, road traffic accidents, which kill 302,000, and drowning, with 171,000 deaths, the WHO said in the statement, adding that it was "alarmed by the magnitude of the problem."

It warned that road traffic injuries and suicides could rank among the top 15 causes of deaths worldwide by 2020.

"A business-as-usual approach is no longer acceptable," said Dr. Shigeru Omi, WHO's Western Pacific regional director. "We, as public health professionals, need to address the causes of injuries and injury-related deaths in partnership with other sectors and stakeholders."

The WHO opened a meeting of national experts in Manila on Monday to discuss future directions for injury and violence prevention programs.

Omi stressed the need to raise public awareness and appealed to political leaders for resources needed to address the problem.

"We must build our institutional capacity and human resources to meet the challenges of injury and violence prevention," he said. *AP*

# 40 killed in Iraq bloodshed; PM to unveil Cabinet

BAGHDAD—FORTY IRAQIS WERE killed in a day of bloodshed Sunday, including attacks near Baghdad airport, as Prime Minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki moved closer to announcing a Cabinet five months after elections.

Maliki was poised to unveil a Cabinet that leaves the key security ministries vacant, a prominent member of his Shiite alliance said, amid hopes that filling Iraq's power vacuum would help quell the raging violence.

Fourteen Iraqis were killed and six wounded in a pair of suicide car bombings at the checkpoint leading to the Baghdad International Airport.

Two vehicles packed with explosives were detonated in a parking lot near the checkpoint, the US military said in a statement, adding that the attacks did not target the base itself.

The violence came as Maliki appeared set to break weeks of deadlock over the new government by leaving the controversial interior and defense portfolios vacant and instead keeping them in his own hands for the time being.

"I think Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki will announce the government without interior and defense," Bahaa al-Aaraji, an MP close to Shiite radical leader Moqtada al-Sadr, told reporters on the sidelines of a parliamentary session.

"He will be the acting minister of interior and defense and then, maybe after two or three weeks, he will appoint the appropriate people for these jobs," he said.

An MP from Maliki's own Dawa party, Hassan al-Seniad, had already raised the possibility of the premier designate keeping some portfolios in his own hands as he bids to finalize a Cabinet lineup in the next 48 hours.

But the manner in which the new premier has conducted the talks drew an angry response from one of the smaller factions in his Shiite United Iraqi Alliance, which announced that it was abandoning the list on which it fought December's parliamentary elections.

"Our decision is final," said Sabah al-Saadi, spokesperson for the Fadhila party, which holds 15 of the alliance's 128 seats in the 275-seat parliament.

"Even if they give us the oil ministry now, we will not rejoin the negotiations," he said.

The party held the oil ministry in the outgoing government but reports suggested the portfolio was likely to go to Shiite independent Hussein Shahristani in the new lineup.

Fadhila's walkout was matched by threats to quit the talks from the main Sunni Arab bloc, whose participation in a national unity government is seen as vital if the sting is to be taken out of the insurgency raging in Sunni areas.

"If we don't get our rights, we will review our participation in the entire political process," warned Salman al-Jumayli, an MP with the National Concord Front. *AFP*

**PATCH Adams in drag joins Mother's Day peace vigil in front of White House May 14.** AFP

# Assaults on Brazil cops leave 52 dead

SAO PAULO—AT LEAST 52 PEOPLE, including 35 police officers, have been killed after a second night of organized gang attacks on police stations across the southeastern state of Sao Paulo, officials said Sunday.

The weekend onslaught against police stations and barracks has left 14 suspected attackers and three bystanders dead and another 53 people injured, including 39 police officers, six attackers and eight bystanders, they said.

Since late Friday over 100 attacks have been launched by the gang in Brazil's most populated state, in apparent reprisal for the transfer of jailed gangsters to a high-security prison, officials said.

At the same time, scores of people have been taken hostage in uprisings in at least 51 prisons of the state's 144 prisons.

The Sao Paulo prisons syndicate said about 242 hostages have been taken in the past 48 hours, including prison guards.

Police said they had put down some 16 prison disturbances and rescued about 85 people taken hostage in one of the state's worst outbreaks of civil unrest.

Sao Paulo state also has one of Brazil's highest prison populations, with some 125,000 inmates behind bars.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has offered Sao Paulo Gov. Claudio Lembo federal help to restore order, but Lembo believes the situation is being brought under control and has so far declined any assistance, according to a CBN radio report.

Lula, who is currently attending a European-Latin American summit in Vienna, Austria, said Saturday that more social investment was needed to offset such violence. *AFP*

AFP

**NO BLOODSPORT HERE—IT'S A COWFIGHT!**

**"Picatchou" (left) and "Doly," two Eringer cows, fight May 14, during the Battle of the Queens finals in Aproz, Switzerland. The cows simply push, forehead against forehead, using their horns. The new queen is the one that forces all others to retreat.**

# Israel kills 7 in West Bank raids

JENIN, WEST BANK—ISRAELI troops killed seven Palestinians including a leading Islamic Jihad militant on Sunday in the bloodiest fighting in weeks in the occupied West Bank, an Israeli military official and Palestinian sources said.

The violence drew vows of revenge from Islamic Jihad, a group that has spearheaded attacks against Israel throughout a more than five-year Palestinian uprising.

An Israeli military spokesperson, Capt. Jacob Dallal, said soldiers shot and killed Elias Eshkar, a "top Islamic Jihad terrorist in the West Bank" blamed for being mastermind of attacks that have killed more than 50 Israelis since early 2005.

The most recent suicide bombing blamed on Eshkar killed 11 people in a Tel Aviv eatery in mid-April, the highest death toll in an attack in the Jewish state in about two years.

Four other militants died in the raid in which soldiers surrounded a house in the town of Qabatiya, as Eshkar hid inside, including Eshkar's brother, Dallal said. *Reuters*

# After attacks, UK eyes lessons on 'core values'

LONDON—BRITAIN IS CONSIDERING introducing compulsory lessons on "core British values" for children in response to last July's suicide bomb attacks on London, the government said on Monday.

Education Minister Bill Rammell said a six-month review would examine whether all 11 to 16-year-olds should be taught about issues such as freedom of speech, civic responsibility, and democracy and how historically they developed in Britain.

"If we are to get a proper modern sense of British identity, which I think is the best way to tackle extremism, then I think that's very important," Rammell told BBC radio.

"When we look at what happened with the bombings last July, when people were prepared to kill themselves in order to kill others, I think education can play a role in helping to get a better sense of what are the core values ... that cut across the cultures in Britain."

The proposal comes in response to the attacks on London on July 7 when four Britons blew up themselves and 52 commuters on the capital's transport system.

Last week the government produced a definitive narrative about the bombings but some critics said it failed to adequately address what had driven the men to carry out the attacks as they had shown little outward sign of militant behavior.

Mohammad Sidique Khan, who was believed to be the group's leader, was a well-respected teacher who worked with children with special needs while another, Shehzad Tanweer, played cricket with friends the night before the bombings.

Rammell said he had met Muslim students and academics since the July attacks to listen to their views and grievances, and there was a consensus for a debate on the issue.

"What are those things that are essential to all cultures within British society?" he said.

"I think we need a better debate about that nationally and I do think we need to be discussing it through the curriculum with children." *Reuters*

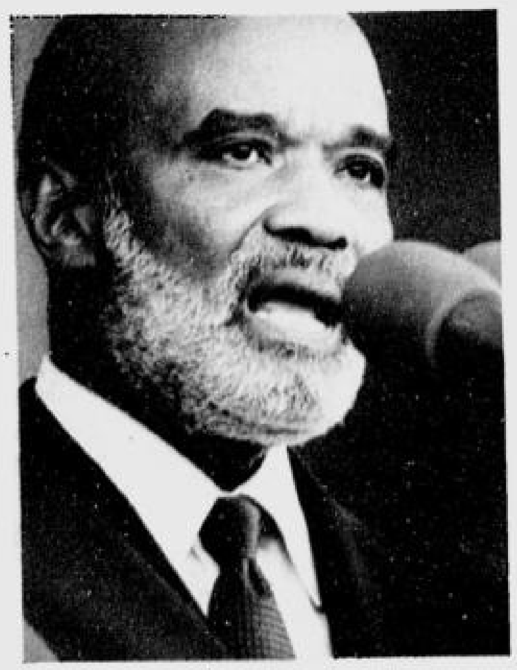
# In US, use of car seat belts grows

WASHINGTON—AFTER A decade of campaigns to get people in cars to wear seat belts and keep children away from air bags, progress is substantial but uneven, the federal government will report on Monday, as the annual Memorial Day publicity and enforcement drive begins.

Researchers say seat belt use by front-seat occupants is at 82 percent, up from 61 percent a decade ago. Research also shows that children too small for standard belts are for the most part placed in the back seat, away from air bags.

But a new study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, based on records of fatal crashes in 2004, shows that young males, pickup truck drivers and drivers on rural roads are more likely than others to be unbelted. A $31-million advertising campaign in English and Spanish, aimed at young males and rural pickup drivers, begins Monday.

While 82 percent of front-seat occupants use seat belts, 48 million people do not, said Philip W. Haseltine, executive director of the Air Bag and Seat Belt Safety Campaign. *NYT*



**PREVAL speaks at inauguration.** REUTERS

# Preval sworn in as Haiti president

PORT-AU-PRINCE—RENE PREVAL, A 63-year-old agronomist seen as a champion of the poor, was sworn in as president of Haiti on Sunday, two years after Jean Bertrand Aristide fled the impoverished Caribbean nation.

The mild-mannered moderate leftist took the oath of office for a five-year term at a ceremony here attended by foreign dignitaries and members of Haiti's newly elected parliament.

The mood was largely festive in the capital, although shots rang out at a Port-au-Prince prison some two hours before the inauguration ceremony in what police said was an escape attempt by a dozen prisoners.

Preval took the oath of office while placing one hand on the Haitian constitution.

"I pledge allegiance to the Constitution, to respect and ensure respect for the laws of Haiti and to protect the sovereignty of the nation," he said in his native Creole.

Among the prominent foreign guests were Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, the younger brother of US President George W. Bush, French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy and Canada's Governor General Michaelle Jean, who was born in Haiti.

Thousands of Haitians celebrated Preval's inauguration outside the parliament building where the ceremony took place.

Haitians decorated their homes with flowers, wore T-shirts with pictures of Preval and Aristide, as they danced and sang throughout the capital. Some even chanted: "Whether you want it or not, Aristide will come back."

"Finally I got what I wanted," said Evelyne Dessours, a Preval supporter. "I wish him well in his work, hoping that he will give me work too."

After his swearing-in, the new leader made a brief speech at the presidential palace before a crowd of thousands.

"Haitians, the solution to the country's problems is in our hands," the new president said.

"We must make peace through constant dialogue. ... If we make peace, we will be able to open the door to investments, employment, the development of tourism and education."

Preval said the 8,900-strong UN mission deployed here after Aristide's departure was "not over yet" and that it should stay to help train Haitian police.

Security was tight with some 4,500 members of the Haitian police on the streets, backed up by UN peacekeepers. *AFP*

# More surgeries, long rehab for injured Tejada

By Jasmine W. Payo

MORE SURGERIES and a long rehabilitation period await Purefoods cager Eugene Tejada, who was severely injured in a freak accident in the last quarter of the Red Bull-Purefoods game Sunday night in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

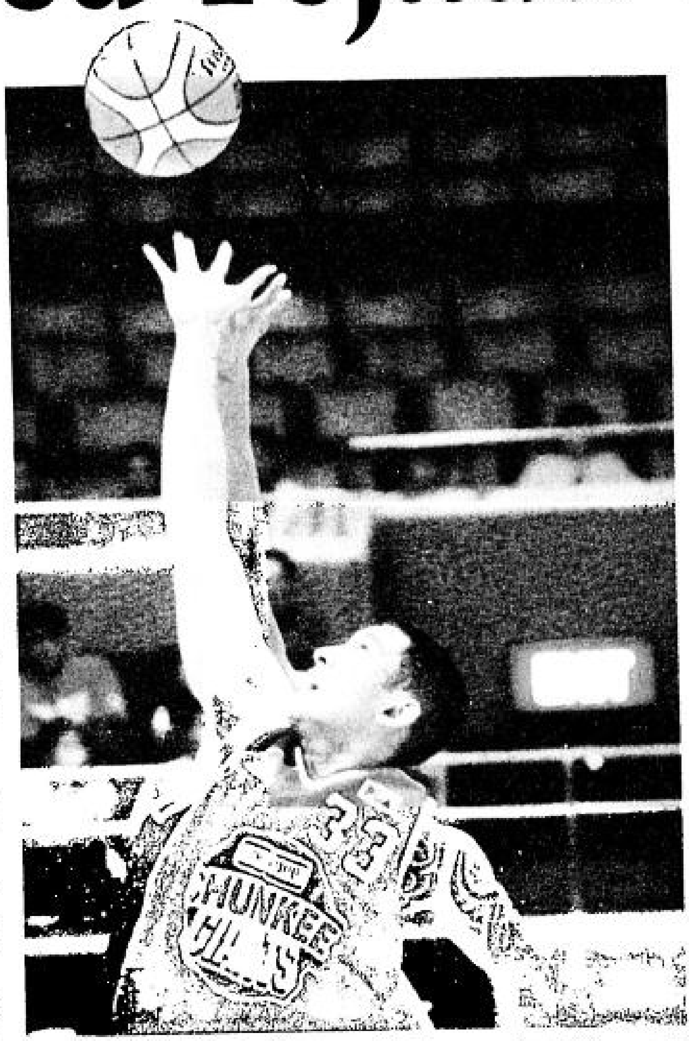
"His condition has improved," Purefoods team governor Rene Pardo said yesterday.

Tejada injured his neck after falling hard on his back in a rebound scuffle that resulted in a four-man pileup.

While the other players got up, Tejada remained on the floor, unable to move.

It took some 40 minutes before paramedics could transfer him to a special stretcher and bring him to Makati Medical Center, where he underwent a non-surgical procedure.

"The close reduction of neck dislocation was successful," according to a medical bulletin released yesterday. "Surgery to fuse unstable neck portions will be done within the week when inflammation subsides. Rehabilitation follows."



EUGENE Tejada: "No problem with his upper body." PDI PHOTO

The Fil-Am forward, whose parents will be coming home from San Francisco, California, complained of losing sensation in the lower half of his body as he lay face down on the floor while stunned players and officials stood around him.

"There's no problem with his upper body," said Pardo. "There's improvement in his sensation, but he still can't move his legs."

Aficionados couldn't recall a similar grave incident since the country's pro basketball league opened in 1975.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala said the accident "is truly unfortunate and taken by the league with a heavy heart."

"The PBA and its quick response service provider, Lifeline Arrows Medical Specialists, have already met to strengthen its emergency response capability in the future to prevent and rectify the emergency response system," Eala said.

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Nadal asserts mastery of Federer /A24
■ Heat rip Nets anew; Clippers shade Suns /A24

# Cagayan Palaro bets hurt in mishap

LEGAZPI CITY—TWENTY-FIVE DELegates from Cagayan Valley to the storm-shortened Palarong Pambansa, including a head coach, were injured after the three buses carrying them back home bumped into each other along Maharlika Highway in Barangay San Isidro, Libmanan, Camarines Sur at about 6 a.m., Sunday.

The victims were brought to the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City for treatment.

The head coach, identified as Addun Neovides, 44, suffered spinal injuries, the police report said.

A staff member of the BMC-Health Emergency Management said Neovides was conscious but was under observation while the rest of the delegation who sustained minor injuries were released at about 10:30 a.m. the same day.

Addun was later brought by an ambulance back to Cagayan Valley while his 24 companions went home on a new bus after two of the three Florida buses were damaged during the accident.

The police report said the first bus suddenly stopped, and was hit by the following bus, which was in turn bumped by the third vehicle. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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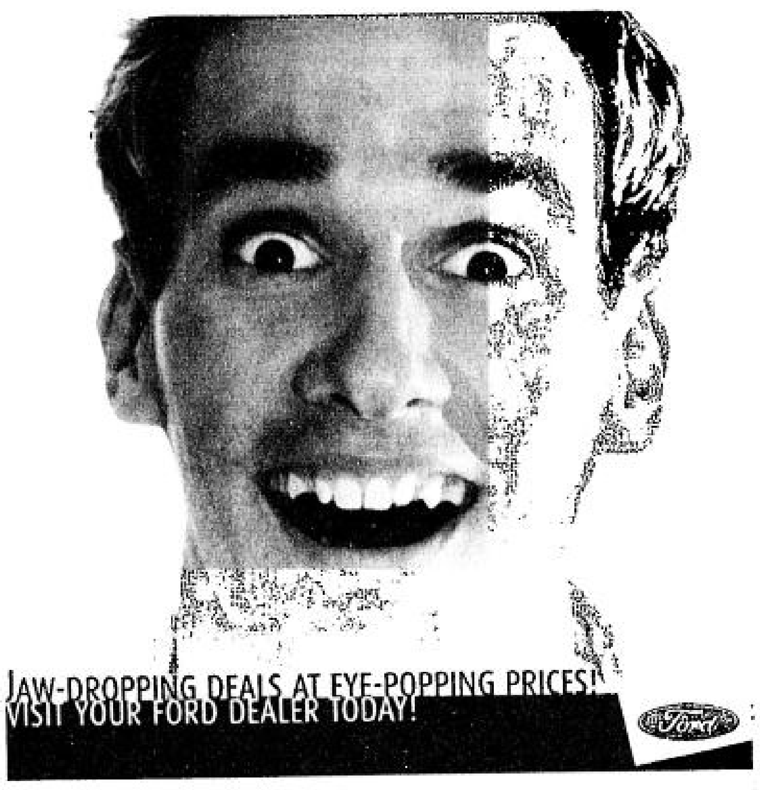

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**THE PHILIPPINE** delegation to the 37th Chess Olympiad pay a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo at Malacañang yesterday. LYN RILLON

# *Paragua to play top board for RP Team*

IT'S NOW GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA'S turn to prove his mettle against the world's best.

The 22-year-old Paragua, the country's highest-ranked player, takes over the top board from GM Eugene Torre, 54, who'll now man board 2 for the Philippine men's team to the 37th Chess Olympiad slated in Turin, Italy, from May 20-June 5.

GM Joey Antonio will play board 3, while No. 1 qualifier National Master Darwin Laylo will man board 4. Completing the team aiming for a top 20 finish in the 2004 Chess Olympiad in Mallorca, Spain, are Fide Master Oliver Dimakiling and 12-year-old FM Wesley So.

Women International Master-elect Sheerie Joy Lomibao will spearhead the distaff side seeking to improve on its 48th place finish in Mallorca. Lomibao will be supported by WIM Beverly Mendoza, Women National Master Catherine Perena and WNM Sherily Cua, respectively.

They left for Turin last night, accompanied by National Chess Federation of the Philippines executive director and men's team captain lawyer Sammy Estimo, women's team captain NM Cesar Caturla, games analyst NM Rolando Nolte and William So, Wesley's father.

The Philippines is seeded 33rd among 133 men's teams and 53th among 98 women's teams.

# Rain or Shine, Granny Goose in vital clash

**Games Today (San Andres Gym, Malate)**
2 p.m.—TeleTech vs Harbour Centre
4 p.m.—Granny Goose vs Rain or Shine

AFTER A STORMY PERFORMANCE THE LAST three games, Rain or Shine coach Leo Austria hopes for a change of fortune when the Elasto Painters battle the unpredictable Granny Goose Tortillos today in the 2006 PBL Unity Cup at the San Andres Gym in Malate.

With so much at stake for both squads, the 4 p.m. encounter is expected to be as exciting and scary as their first round showdown which the Snackmasters won, 62-61, as Kevin dela Peña scored on a layup as time expired.

If Rain or Shine prevails, the Elasto Painters (7-5) would remain in contention for one of two outright semis berths. A loss would pave the way for league-leading Montaña Pawnshop (9-3) and Toyota Otis (9-4) to take the two automatic semis slots even they drop their remaining games.

Another defeat would also jeopardize Rain or Shine's bid for one of two twice-to-beat quarterfinal incentives since Granny Goose and Magnolia Ice Cream are just within striking distance at 7-6 and 6-6, respectively.

Equally important is the 2 p.m. showdown between Harbour Centre (5-7) and TeleTech.

Despite their stinging 78-85 loss to the Snackmasters just two days back, the Port Masters remain in contention for a quarterfinal incentive if can they hurdle their last two games.

At 4-9, the Titans can still make it to the next round if they can beat the Port Masters by 15 points and then Harbour Centre drops its last game against Montana. *Jasmine W. Payo*

**JOJO Tangkay (19) will be a key figure for Rain or Shine.** ERIK ARAZAS

# Pacquiao's GenSan five gains MVBA Minda final

**GAME TODAY**
(*Barba Sports Center*)
5:30 p.m.—Cebu Landmaster-Toledo vs. Mantawi Traders (Visayas Semis B, Game 1)

GEN. SANTOS CITY—PacMan-GenSan of boxing hero Manny Pacquiao thwarted Pryce Pharma-MisOr, 83-68, Sunday night to clinch their best-of-three semifinal series and advance to the Mindanao Division Finals of the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) First Conference tournament.

Louie Medalla and Apol Coronado combined for 19 points as PacMan raced to a 26-18 advantage in the first quarter and never looked back.

The pair continued to wax hot and with more sniping from Jethro Recustodio, PacMan erected its biggest lead, 52-31, on a triple by Coronado.

Pryce Pharma made its last stand in the first five minutes of the final period, holding PacMan scoreless to come close, 56-66.

"Our defense on their key players also worked for us today," said GenSan coach Ramon Pido.

The Visayas Division semifinals kicks off today with second seed Cebu Landmaster-Toledo hosting the Mantawi Traders at the Marcelo A. Barba Sports Center at 5:30 p.m. The two teams split their elimination round games with Toledo winning the first, 81-67, and Mantawi getting its revenge on May 11, 75-72.

The scores:

**PACMAN-GENSAN 83**—Coronado 19, Medalla 15, Tadena 12, Recustodio 11, Sandoval 8, Farochilten 5, Jabagat 4, Dennison 3, Deligero 2, Locsin 2, Dagcutan 2.

**PRYCE PHARMA-MISOR 68**—Lumantas 19, Laygo 18, Mendoza 14, Alfeche 4, Mercado 4, Tagupa 3, Redulosa 2, Carretas 2, Numeran 2, Trumpeta 0, Tedlos 0, Saludsod 0.

Quarters: 26-18, 47-31, 66-51, 83-68

| STANDINGS | W | L |
|---|---|---|
| **North Division** | | |
| Bacchus/Harbour | 6 | 3 |
| Forward Taguig | 4 | 2 |
| Batang Tagaytay | 4 | 4 |
| Spring-P'ñaque | 3 | 3 |
| Pangasinan | 2 | 6 |
| Laguna-Sta. Rosa | 0 | 6 |
| **South Divsion** | | |
| Ozamiz Cotta | 5 | 1 |
| Iligan Crusaders | 6 | 3 |
| North Cotabato | 5 | 3 |
| Pagadian Expl. | 5 | 3 |
| Valencia | 3 | 5 |
| Iloilo Warriors | 1 | 4 |

# Pagadian rips Bacchus/Harbour

PAGADIAN CITY—THE PAGADIAN EXPLORers pulled Bacchus/Harbour Centre-Manila back to earth with a crushing 104-72 victory Sunday night in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the city gym here.

Barely 24 hours after downing defending champion Ozamiz Cotta, the Manilans of businessman Mikee Romero and coach Lawrence Chongson came out smoking again before settling for a 28-25 first-quarter lead.

The Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co waxed hot in the next 10 minutes to turn the game around and win by a record 28-point margin, the highest so far in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings and Prime Channel.

Ex-pro Peter Naron barrelled his way inside while PBL veteran Lou Gatumbato quarterbacked the Explorers, who turned a three-point deficit into a 13-point lead at the break.

With its fifth win in eight games, Pagadian tied idle North Cotabato for third place in the southern division.

The scores:

**PAGADIAN 102**—Naron 26, Daja 11, Singco 11, Pamaran 10, Marata 10, Gatumbato 10, Ayuk 10, Quilo 8, Cortez 2, Omandam 2, Singedas 2, Salud 0, Lanutan 0.

**BACCHUS/HARBOUR 74**—Hardin 24, Pribdhas 14, Jun Cuevas 13, Membrere 7, Coyukang 7, Sta. Cruz 4, Retaga 3, Jay Cuevas 2, Reyes 0, Padilla 0, Masbang 0, Pile 0.

Quarters: 25-28, 55-42, 77-62, 102-74.

# Cantada's new challenge

**SPECTATOR**

*Al S. Mendoza*

THE LAST 7 WEEKS SAW GERARD CANTADA tail Jennifer Rosales in the LPGA Golf Tour in, where else, but America.

"I made some adjustments to her swing," said Cantada, the former world junior golf standout. "I'm glad everything's going on smoothly with her since she tapped me to be her swing coach."

Their partnership only began last March.

Cantada, who just arrived from the US, has been the swing coach of Gerald, Jennifer's brother, since Gerald turned pro in 1999.

"Jennifer is a very talented golfer and all I needed to do was make minor alterations to her swing, particularly the back swing," said Cantada. "I also made a minor adjustment to her setup."

About Jennifer's recurring wrist injury, Cantada is happy to report that "it's been totally healed."

Jennifer has been struggling a bit after scoring a breakthrough win in the LPGA in 2004.

I'm not a good golfer, which is obvious since I'm neither a pro nor a thrice-a-week golfer.

But I know a good swing when I see one.

When she was an amateur, Jennifer owned one of the smoothest swings in the world. I noticed, though, during the last two years or so, that she changed her back swing from the natural, semi-flat to upright.

When I pointed this out to Cantada, he said, "That's what I particularly altered."

Cantada, who, among other reasons, came home to satisfy his craving for the Baguio *longganisa* called Dipasupil, is set to go back to the US first week of June to again be by Jennifer's side, "particularly in the US Ladies Open."

Of all our teaching pros, Cantada prides in having the most sophisticated gadgets in golf teaching technology.

In fact, because of his high-tech golf school, Cantada has been acknowledged by the world-famed David Leadbetter Golf Academy "as the only legitimate golf teacher" in the Philippines.

Some of his students at Wack Wack and in his Bicutan golf academy miss him.

"I hope my students understand because I'm doing my own bit of sacrifice in the hope of helping Jennifer regain her confidence," said Cantada. "I'm optimistic that Jennifer would soon be the old Jennifer: Nice, almost perfect swing coupled with her mental toughness."

* * *

Two points from defeat and Rafael Nadal of Spain becomes a winner. All because of Federer's two errant forehands when he had two championship points in the fifth set.

By beating Roger Federer yesterday, Nadal defended his Italian Masters title in Rome in a grueling 5-hour, 5-minute battle of wits, shotmaking and stamina. The score: 6-7 (0), 7-6 (5), 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (5).

Nadal dealt Federer his third defeat in 42 matches this year. All of Federer's three setbacks were at the hands of Nadal.

In beating the world No. 1 from Switzerland, his fifth in six one-on-one matches with Federer, Nadal also set a pair of eye-popping records.

Nadal became the first to score 53 straight victories on clay in 29 years, tying Guillermo Vilas' record that the Argentinian set in 1977.

Nadal, who has already won nine straight tournaments on clay, also tied Bjorn Borg's 16 titles recorded while a teenager.

Nadal is 19 years old. Next week, he can surpass Vilas' 53 clay court victories with a win over Tommy Haas in the first round of the Hamburg Masters.

I immensely enjoyed the match yesterday on Star Sports.

"I was lucky when he (Federer) had match point he made a mistake with two forehands," said Nadal, locks flowing, eating his traditional post-match plate of pasta at Foro Italico.

Indeed, mistakes happen, even to the best.

* * *

FASTBREAK. My condolences to the loved ones of Rod D. Garcia, who passed away on May 14. His remains lie at Loyola Chapels in Guadalupe, Makati. He was the father of Pat Garcia, the talented Fine Arts graduate of UP-Diliman.

* * *

*Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net*

## SPORTSWATCH

### JVC reg'l badminton winds up in Bacolod

THE JVC OPEN REGIONAL BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS WINDS UP ITS four-stage provincial swing with the staging of the Bacolod City leg beginning today with 260 players clashing for top honors in various divisions at the Pohang Badminton Center. Events on tap are the juniors and elite divisions plus the intercollegiate team championships. The winners will get P5,000 (elite) and P3,000 (juniors) cash each, plus medals and gift items. The intercollegiate champions will bring home P8,000 plus merchandise prizes. Also at stake in the tournament backed by Victor (exclusively distributed by Pcome Industrial Sales), Lactacyd and Bingo Bonanza, are trophies and berths in the JVC Open Championships slated next month. The event caps the two-month long tournament in the provinces. This year's Bacolod field has lured participants from Capiz, Iloilo, Cadiz, Bago, Villadolid, Talisay, Silay, Carlota and cities and towns of the Negros province, according to the organizing IMG.

### Ford Shootout team from MGC, not AGCC

THE CAPTION FOR THE PHOTO ACCOMPANYING THE STORY "FORD Shootout: Grand Finals Cast of Teams Complete," which came out on page A40 of INQUIRER Sports on May 15, 2006, named the players in the picture as Rick and Verni Oledan and Indren and Christine Naidoo of Alabang GCC. It should have been Jojo and Ina Guingona, Tony Olbes and Ma. Lourdes Gamboa of Manila Golf Club. They were shown with Fedgolf's Ogie Manalo.

### 60 fights up in NCA's Roligon cockfest

DERBY ACES FROM THE NATIONAL COCKERS ASSOCIATION ARE AGAIN seeing action in the NCA 5-cock one-day derby which starts its 60-fight schedule at 5 p.m. today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. Among the participants are Danding Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Ynares, Sundance Group, Jun Santiago, Boy Jiao, derby hosts Rudy Albano and Pico Berin, Frank Berin, Ellan Nagano, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson, Manny and Arman Santos, Pepito Ngo, Tony Tan, Boy de Roca, Rep. Butch Pichay, Rey Briones, the Madlambayan brothers and Jet Fernando. The second leg of the NCA International 8-Cock Derby sizzles on May 29, 31 and June 2. For inquiries, call 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

### GCAP weigh-in today at SJ Coliseum

TODAY IS THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES IN THE Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines 5-cock derby at San Juan Coliseum. Entries will be accommodated from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, derby hostilities start tomorrow. The entry LCC Leonard of Louie Cua topped the GCAP 5-cocker last May 3 after posting five victories in as many fights. Another special 5-cock derby blasts off at the venue on May 20 with cocker-sportsman Tony Antonio, son of prominent cocker Patrick Antonio, as host. For inquiries, call 725-5369 or 725-5665.

### National bullstag derby gets going

MORE THAN 80 FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN THE ANNUAL NFBG NATIONAL 8-Bullstag Derby which gets under way today at the Araneta Coliseum. Eighty-eight entries registered in regional qualifying rounds held in Ilocos Norte, Iloilo, Davao and Zamboanga, according to the organizing National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders. Early leaders with a perfect score of four points are Benjamin Dimaano of ZGBA, Zaldy Du and Roger Talino of Migba, Willy Villarica and Obet Son of LGBA and Eustaquio dela Torre of GF-BAN. Other 4-cock elimination schedules in the derby which stakes more than P3 million in prizes will be on May 18 and 23 with the championship round kicking off on May 25, said NFGB president Ricoy Palmares Jr. Over 200 entries from 18 breeders organizations are vying in the derby which stakes a cash pot of P3 million.

# Lim, Reyes post kart win

PETER LIM OF THE CEBU RACING GROUP and Franco Reyes ruled their respective classes yesterday in the first Denso Karting Championship at the Boom Na Boom Kart Track inside the CCP Complex.

Lim rallied to beat Vencer John Suba of Jet Racing in the Formula SL class while Reyes also came from behind to capture the Mini ROK crown.

The races served as the culminating event of the two-week 75th Diamond Jubilee celebration of the governing Automobile Association of the Philippines.

AAP directors Mandy Eduque and David Areenas and Denso VP for Technical Service Masuhiro Kono did the ceremonial flag-off.

Sharing the limelight were Alvin Santos and Robert Castro who took turns winning the AAP Fun Kart Club Race.

Santos beat Peter Binamira and Armand Hipolito in the morning race while Castro topped the afternoon run over Larry Medrano and Melvin Nuñez.

It was a sorry setback for Suba, who took a seven-second lead over Lim and seemed headed for an easy Formula SL win.

## RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Lovely Tara (3), Playing Cool (1), Pulilan Beauty/Kalashnikov (5), Gelay's Charm (7)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Country Boy (7), Speed Assault (1), Sol Invictus (2), Thereshope (8)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Kawiliwili (3), Leading Man (4), Carolina Belle (2), Material Trick (5)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Idol (5), Joint Account (2), Reporter (3), Sweet Talk (6), Prince Valiant (9)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Manila's Style (2), Renize Stays (1), Karma (5), Batang Westside (3)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Earth Angel (9), American Beauty (8), Yonder Girl (1), Raging River (7), Something Silver (5)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Sunline (9), Vitality (10), Gemstone (6), Indian Boy (2), Classy Pages (11)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Anytime Anywhere (11), Formidable Jaeda (2), Letshaveaparty (1), Morning Hell (6), American Idol (9), Special Science (8)

TANDUAY

| Guevarra, John Mark | Torres, Jervin | Barnachea, Santy | Asuncion, Alfredo | Sicam, Harvey | Rendole, Oscar | Calpito, Aldren | Quirimit, Arnel |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 05h19'01" | 05h18'50" | Same | Same | Same | Same | Same | 05h12'02" |
| GO21 | ELIXIR SPORTS | SUNBOLT | COOL PAP | ELIXIR SPORTS | INCA | INCA | ELIXIR SPORTS |

COSSACK VODKA · WOW · AIR 21 · INCA · COOL PAP · ELIXIR · Mail More · WM · GO21

Padyak Pinoy 2006

# Barnachea opens hefty Tour lead

**By Musong R. Castillo**

ANGELES CITY—THE STAGE MANY THOUGHT would be a sleeper turned out to be anything but a ho-hum lap.

And after four of the eight stages on schedule, the Tour Pilipinas Tanduay Padyak Pinoy 2006 may have just opened its eyes to a prospective champion.

Pedaling hard yet again and getting help from a foe, Santy Barnachea opened a commanding lead halfway through the summer cycling odyssey by finishing with the six-man lead pack in the fourth stage.

Arnel Quirimit, inspired when the race again passed through his hometown of Pozzorubio in Pangasinan, bagged a second stage victory after forging an alliance with Barnachea.

Quirimit clocked 5 hours, 12 minutes and two seconds for the 194.9-kilometer ride from Baguio to this congested city, the same time that Barnachea got along with four others who formed the lead group starting from Binalonan, Pangasinan.

From a shaky 27-second lead over Ericson Obosa overnight, Barnachea pulled away to a seven-minute, 29-second advantage and a 7:58 edge over third placer Erick Feliciano with his total time of 17 hours, 57 minutes and 26 seconds.

Fagged out after his winning effort in the tough La Union-to-Baguio third stage on Sunday, Feliciano struggled and eventually finished in a 28-man group that checked in ninth for the day, seven minutes and two seconds behind Quirimit.

Obosa, who wore the yellow jersey in the first two days, rued his wrong choice of equipment as he faltered in what was supposed to be his favorite race.

Winds blew hard from all directions when the entourage hit the flat roads of La Union and Pangasinan. Using a wide rim frame, normally used in calm conditions, affected Obosa's balance.

Still, there was no denying that the day belonged to Barnachea, the 30-year-old from Umingan, Pangasinan, who was on attack mode for the fourth straight stage.

"*Ayaw ko pang sabihin na akin na ang korona* (I still don't want to say that the championship is mine)," Barnachea told the INQUIRER. "*Pero maganda na rin at nadagdagan ko yung lamang ko* (But it's a good thing that I was able to pad my lead)."

Barnachea, who bagged podium finishes in each of the first three stages, admitted a breakaway was not in his plan at the start of the day.

But when no one gave chase when he tried a solo breakaway from the second group that included Obosa, Feliciano and defending champion Warren Davadilla, Barnachea rode furiously and caught up with Quirimit's group in Binalonan.

OVERALL leader Santy Barnachea grabs a pack of ice water given him by his brother Larry (right) as he pulls away from the main peloton in Villasis, Pangasinan. BOY CABRIDO

Barnachea said he then assured Quirimit he would not contest the day's lap honors if he would help him sustain the breakaway.

"*Di ko na hinahangad ang* overall, *mahirap na 'yun* (I am not aspiring to win the overall title anymore, it's almost impossible)," Quirimit said.

Quirimit outsprinted Aldren Calpito, who finished second, and Oscar Rendole as he duplicated his victory in the second lap Saturday.

The 2003 champion Quirimit went on to crash the Top 10, moving up to No. 8, 16:16 off the pace. Davadilla stood ninth, 17:23 behind, followed by Eusebio Quinones, who was 22:30 off Barnachea.

The event is being co-presented by Wow Magic Sing, organized by the Dynamic Outsource Solutions Inc. headed by Gary Cayton, supervised by the Philippine National Cycling Association headed by Paquito Rivas, sanctioned by the PhilCycling and supported by the PNP, the departments of public works as well as tourism, and MMDA.

## Team Elixir forges ahead of Cossack

ANGELES CITY—TEAM ELIXIR Sports, behind skipper Arnel Quirimit's second stage victory, grabbed the team lead over Cossack Vodka in the Tour Pilipinas Tanduay Padyak Pinoy 2006 yesterday.

Quirimit boosted Elixir to a total time of 21 hours, 1 minute and 48.202 seconds after the 194.9-km trek from Baguio to here and opened a 4-minute, 58.485-second lead over erstwhile leader Cossack.

Cossack coach Renato Dolosa said many cyclists, including several members of his team, suffered from a mild case of diarrhea late Sunday.

Rookie Harvey Sicam was the second man in for the stage for Elixir, in the process climbing to fourth overall behind leader Santy Barnachea, Ericson Obosa and Erick Feliciano.

But Dolosa believes that the team race is far from over with two tough stages still on tap in the final four days of the Tour that makes its southern sojourn starting with the Marikina-to-Lucena race today.

## STAGE 4 RESULTS

INDIVIDUAL
9 54 J. Bautista (Sunbolt) 5:19:04
10 R. Clauna (Cool Pap) same
11 E. Quinones (Go21) same
12 R. Gorantes (GO21) same
13 R. Gutierrez, (Cool Pap) same
14 R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka) same-
15 W. Davadilla (Mail & More) same
16 M. Aleonar (Air21) same -
17 H. Mangahis (Sunbolt) same -
18 R. Burgos, (Mail & More) same
19 M. Mendoza (Sunbolt) same
20 R. Austria (Go21) same
21 I. Valenzuela (Cossack Vodka ) same
22 J. Delica (Air21) same -
23 M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka) same -
24 J. Ricafort (Elixir Sports) same
25 A. Miranda (Air21) same -
26 D. Marana (Mail & More) same -
27 R. Olog (Go21) same -
28 J. Servino (Go21) same -
29 J. Calderon (Red Bull) same
30 R. Navarro (One Shot Wonder) same -
31 N. Del Rosario (Red Bull) same
32 T. Martinez (Red Bull) same
33 F. Feliciano (Air21) same
34 E. Obosa (Inca) same
35 A. Ricafort (Elixir Sports) same
36 O. Fronda (Elixir Sports) same
37 S. Torres (Mail & More) 5:19:34
38 A. Matanum (Air21) same
39 E. Cabacungan (Go21) 5:19:54
40 D. Dela Cruz (Air21) 5:21:25

OVERALL INDIVIDUAL
1 S. Barnachea (Sunbolt) 17:57:26
2 E. Obosa (Inca) 18:04:56
3 F. Feliciano (Air21) 18:05:25
4 H. Sicam (Elixir Sports) 18:08:58
5 T. Martinez (Red Bull) 18:09:28
6 I. Valenzuela (Cossack Vodka) 18:09:57
7 R. Sambrano (Cossack Vodka) 18:09:59
8 A. Quirimit (Elixir Sports) 18:13:43
9 W. Davadilla (Mail & More) 18:14:50
10 E. Quinones (Go21) 18:19:57
11 M. Reyes (Cossack Vodka) 18:22:01
12 J. Ricafort, ( Elixir Sports) 18:22:06
13 M. Aleonar (Air21) 18:23:07
14 R. Gorantes (Go21) 18:23:49
15 J. Calderon (Red Bull) 18:24:02
16 O. Rendole (Inca 18:28:43
17 A. Asuncion (Cool Pap) 18:29:46
18 J Guevarra (Go21) 18:35:06
19 R. Burgos (Mail & More) 18:41:07
20 M. Mendoza (Sunbolt) 18:41:34
21 D. Marana (Mail & More) 18:41:38
22 W. Calosa (One Shot Wonder) 18:43:20
23 R. Navarro (One Shot Wonder) 18:44:26
24 H. Mangahis (Sunbolt) 18:45:35
25 R. Clauna (Cool Pap) 18:48:41
26 J. Delica (Air21) 18:49:20
27 J. Critalivo (One Shot Wonder) 18:50:05
28 A. Miranda (Air21) 18:51:09
29 E. Ballezar (Cossack Vodka) 18:51:30

# Reyes, Korean bet show way in NTCC; Rodriguez shines

MATCHES TODAY (8 a.m.)

**LADIES**—Cyna Rodriguez vs Maggie Rivera, Maan Legaspi vs Lily Young, Matet Salivio vs Irina Gabasa, Vinice Godio vs Katya dela Cruz, Kwon Ye Seul vs Marilyn Ty, Violy Pegels vs Beachie Abiera, Imee Garcia vs Kathleen Uy, Tess Staub vs Lyn Mangulabnan

**MEN**—Tibor Marcelino vs Rudy Amata, Tootsie de Jesus vs Bill Lawrence, Jan Tambogon vs Shean Bedi, Edmund Yee vs Val Plata

**By Jong Arcano**

GEN. TRIAS, CAVITE—VENJO REYES and young Cyna Rodriguez took the top seeding in their respective divisions on a day when swirling winds made the conditions at the dreaded Dye course of Eagle Ridge awfully tough in the qualifying round of the National Tournament of Club Champions here.

Reyes, representing Manila Golf, bucked a triple bogey-8 on the ninth hole with five birdies en route to a 77—a score he shared with Mimosa's Kim Hee Youen—and took the No. 1 spot after a countback.

Reyes and the rest of the top 12 players after yesterday's 18-hole stroke play drew byes in today's start of the match play phase of the tourney co-presented by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. (HSBC) and INQUIRER Golf.

Left to battle it out for the last four slots in the Round-of-16 in the afternoon were those who occupied the 13th to 20th slots.

Riviera's Rodriguez overcame the demanding conditions and wound up far ahead after her round of 75, with Eagle Ridge bet Ye Seul Kwon settling for an 81.

"It was hell out there and the conditions made us look like beginners," said Vinice Godio, one of the double champions in the cast. Last year's eliminations topnotcher wound up with fifth with a horrendous 91.

Rodel Mangulabnan of Royal Northwoods (78) got the No. 3 seeding and Jingy Tuason of Sta. Elena was No. 4 (79).

Joining Rodriguez and Kwon at the top of the ladies seedings were Imee Garcia of Rancho Palos Verdes and Matet Salivio of Aguinaldo, who both carded 85s.

Sponsors of the NTCC are Sta. Lucia Realty, Callaway as the official apparel, Isuzu the official vehicle, Titleist the official ball, PAL the official carrier, Chivas Regal, The Travel Club and Pacific Air Media.

Platonic, the first locally assembled golf cart, is hole-in-one sponsor.

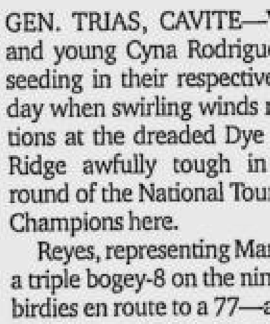
HSBC CEO and president Warner Manning hits the ceremonial drive kicking off hostilities in the National Tournament of Club Champions held at the Eagle Ridge in Gen. Trias, Cavite. Waiting for her turn is INQUIRER president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, shown at left with son Luca and the club champions. ERIK ARAZAS

The scores:

**MEN**—77 Venjo Reyes, 77 Kim Hee Youen, 78 Rod Mangulabnan, 79 Jingy Tuason, 80 Oliver Gan, 81 Jong Soo Park, 83 Indren Naidoo, 83 Miko Yee, 84 Zaldy Villa, 85 Yuichiro Nakanishi, 86 Dennis Nicomedes, 88 Gerald Katigbak, 88 Tootsie de Jesus, 89 Jan Tambogon, 90 Edmund Yee, 92 Tibor Marcelino, 92 Rudy Amata, 94 Val Plata, 94 Shean Bedi, 104 Bill Lawrence.

**LADIES**—75 Cyna Rodriguez, 81 Ye Seul Kwon, 85 Imee Gracia, 85 Matet Salivio, 91 Vinice Godio, 92 Tess Staub, 92 Violy Pegels, 93 Maan Legaspi, 94 Lily Young, 96 Beachie Abiera, 97 Lyn Mangulabnan, 97 Katya dela Cruz, 97 Irina Gabasa, 100 Kathleen Uy, 102 Marilyn Tee, 104 Maggie Rivera, 110 Nanette Filler

# Bernis man to watch as Samsung golf resumes



**BERNIS: Favored**

FORMER NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPION Jun Bernis will be a marked man when the second leg of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour fires off today at the challenging Summit Point and Country Club in Lipa City.

Bernis, the top amateur in 2004 when he also won the DHL Open in Canlubang, hopes to come out strong on the water-laced course.

The "world 18" concept of the course, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., features a sampling of 18 of the most popular golf holes from all over the world, including Amen Corner of the Augusta National, the 14th hole of St. Andrews and the 10th of Pebble Beach.

Out to foil Bernis' bid in the four-day championship sponsored by Samsung are fellow Cangolf bets Ronnie Torrecampo and Boyet Saragoza, National Caddies Open champion Joseph Labajo, former Samsung national titlist Kim Chang-hoi of South Korea, long-hitting jungolfer Gino Bunyi and the veteran Tommy Manotoc.

Marvin Dumandan held off Jay Bayron to rule the kick-off leg of the circuit backed by Taylor Made, C-Lium Fibre, Microtel, Titleist and Custom Clubmakers/KZG, Sunbolt with Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9 and 99.5 RT, Sports Plus as media partners, last month in Baguio.

Aside from the championship division, other events on tap are the Classes C and D for men and the ladies A, B and C divisions. The men's A and B categories will be played in the final two days of this tournament ending Friday.

Former RP Ladies Open champion Carmelette Villaroman heads the ladies' cast.

Aside from gaining berths in the grand finals slated at Mt. Malarayat in November, winners will also get Samsung cell phones and MP3 players, according to the Professional Sports Management Group, headed by Boy Blue Ocampo.

# Davao netters lead march of Head Penn top seeds

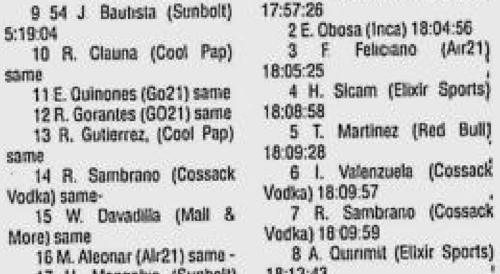
DAVAO CITY BETS EL SANTO SANTOS and Juan Paolo Cansino scored easy wins yesterday to lead the first-round winners in the 2006 Head Penn Junior Tennis Tour at Burhham Park's Athletic Bowl in Baguio City.

Santos, the boys' 18-under top seed, blasted Noy Mendoza, 6-0, 6-0, while boys' 12-under No. 1 Cansino breezed past Mark Santiago, 6-1, 6-0.

Joining Cansino in the next round of this four-day event organized by Dynamic Sports Corp., exclusive distributor of Head and Penn rackets, were Argil Canizares, who beat Dominic Licudine, 6-1, 6-1, and South Cotabato's Kurt Gerapusco, who prevailed over Erick Fernandez, 6-1, 6-0.

In the boys' 16-under division, Gerard Rosario downed Orvin Tinio, 6-3, 6-2. Vince Carlo Ramiscal defeated Bruce Ivan Valenzuela, 6-4, 6-3, in the unisex 10-under class.

In the girls' division, 16-under top seed Macy Solon of Dumaguete blasted Analyn Noble, 6-0, 6-0, and No. 2 Cebuana Kristel Mae Buenacosa outclassed Emy Baguirin, 6-1, 6-1, to advance to the next round, while 14-under division second seed Cindy Gerapusco won over Monique Rafael, 6-4, 4-6 (11-9).



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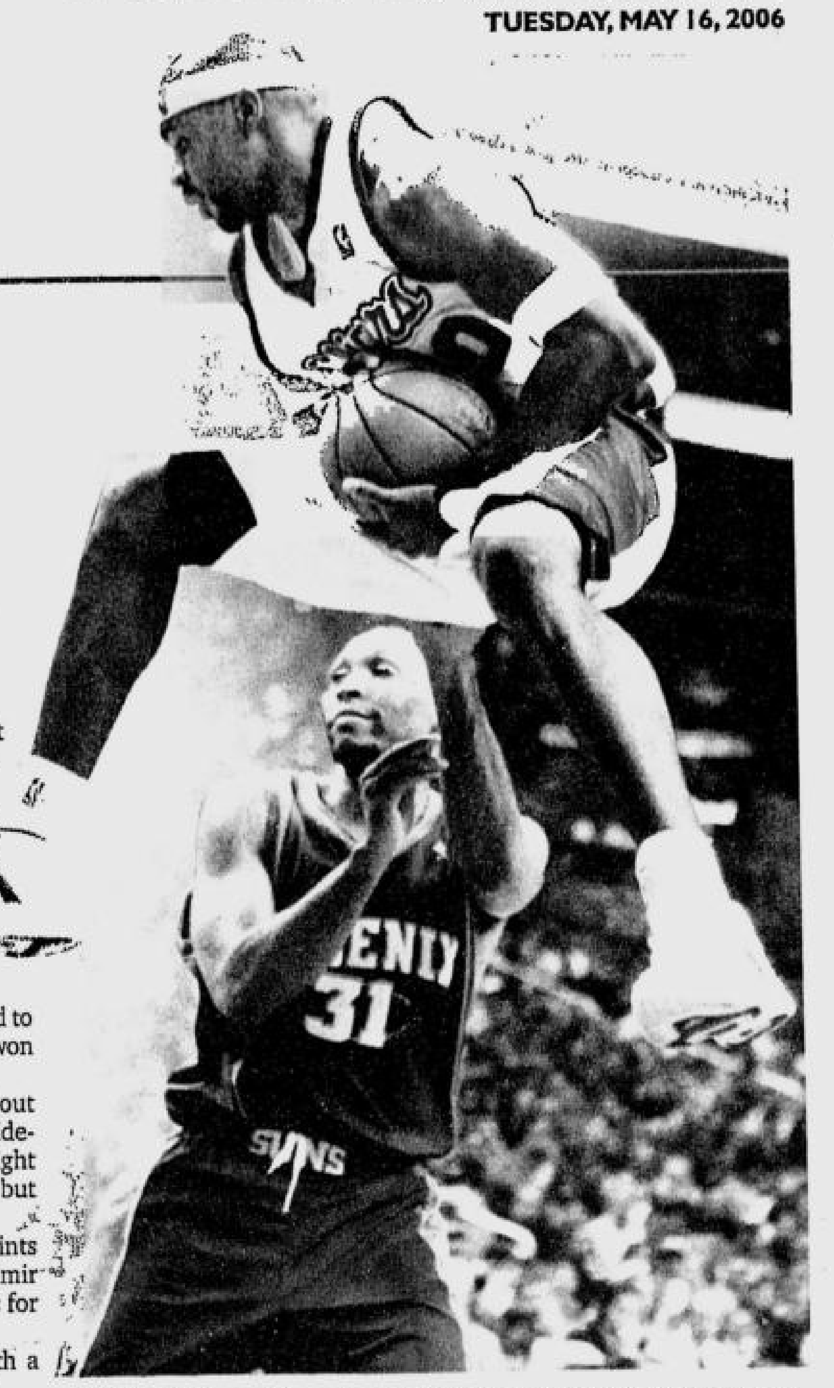
# Heat rip Nets anew; Clippers shade Suns



CLIPPERS' Corey Maggette collars a rebound over the Suns' Shawn Marion in Game 4 of their NBA Western Conference playoffs. REUTERS

**EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—DWAYNE WADE HAD 31 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, and the Miami Heat beat the New Jersey Nets 102-92 on Sunday to move within a game of a second straight trip to the NBA Eastern Conference finals.**

The Heat lead the series 3-1 and can wrap it up when they host Game 5 on Tuesday.

"We're not surprised. When we play Miami Heat basketball on both ends of the floor, we're a tough team to beat, at home or on the road," Wade said. "We go home to Game 5 and try to close it out at home."

Also, the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Phoenix Suns, 114-107, to even their Western Conference semifinals 2-2.

DWYANE Wade: Sensational AP

Wade was sensational for Miami as usual, but it was the play of Antoine Walker and Udonis Haslem during a key stretch of the third quarter that gave them the cushion they needed to hold on for a third straight victory.

Walker scored 20 points on 7-of-11 shooting and Haslem added 20 points and 11 rebounds, shooting 8-of-11. They combined for 16 of Miami's 22 points during the third period, when the Heat built their lead to as much as 11.

"They hit shots, they hit a lot of shots," Nets forward Richard Jefferson said. "Udonis Haslem, I swear he didn't miss one tonight."

Jason Kidd tried to rally the Nets, collecting his ninth postseason triple-double and moving over to guard Wade after his hot start. But New Jersey could never regain the lead after the first quarter.

Kidd had 17 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists, tying Wilt Chamberlain for third place on the postseason career list and moving within one of Larry Bird for second.

Vince Carter added 26 points and Richard Jefferson scored 17. Nenad Krstic had 20 points and 14 rebounds.

In Los Angeles, Elton Brand had 30 points, nine rebounds and eight assists, Sam Cassell added 28 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists to lead the Clippers.

Phoenix star Steve Nash was held to eight points and 11 assists. He shot 3-of-11, and didn't make a field goal after halftime.

The Suns scored 12 straight points to move within one before Brand made an 18-foot jumper with 56 seconds remaining and Cassell hit a 3-pointer with 27 seconds left to clinch the victory.

Brand scored 67 points in the first two games, but was held to 20 in Game 3, when the Suns won 94-91 for a 2-1 series lead.

The Clippers won without starting center Chris Kaman, sidelined because of a sore right shoulder. Kaman suited up but never left the bench.

Corey Maggette had 18 points and 15 rebounds and Vladimir Radmanovic scored 13 points for the Clippers.

Raja Bell led the Suns with a career playoff-high 33 points.

Game 5 is on Tuesday in Phoenix. *AP*

# Alonso wins for his King, countrymen

BARCELONA—RENAULT'S FERNANDO Alonso capped one majestic drive with another on Sunday to become the first Spaniard to win his home Formula One grand prix on an unforgettable afternoon.

The 24-year-old world champion warmed up the 130,000 strong crowd, the biggest yet at the Circuit de Catalunya, by giving King Juan Carlos a passenger ride around the Barcelona track in a road car before the race.

A few hours later he took the checkered flag to drive that same crowd into a frenzy, with the monarch joining him on the podium to present his happy subject with the winner's trophy as the national anthem played.

It was, the Asturian declared proudly, one of the greatest moments in a career that has seen a few firsts already.

In the race, there was only one king of the road and it was Alonso.

"It was the best feeling so far I think in a Formula One car, equal to the Brazilian Grand Prix (last year) where I won the championship," he told a post-race news conference.

"I finished third in that race with a lot of problems defending the third place and I didn't enjoy it so much as I did today when I was alone."

Alonso started from pole position and, with the lead changing only at the pitstops, crossed the line 18.5 seconds clear of Ferrari's Michael Schumacher.

It was his third win of the season but easily the sweetest.

"The last five or six laps I saw that Michael was slowing down, not pushing any more, so it was four or five laps just cruising to the end," Alonso said.

"To race here and to race in front of an all-blue grandstand is a different feeling compared to all the other races.

"It's true that 66 laps is not enough to enjoy all the race, but when you are leading by 10 seconds I think you want to finish the race already and celebrate the victory. It was a fantastic day, difficult to forget for me."

Alonso zigzagged before the finish, gesturing and pumping the air in delight with his fists to take the crowd's roar of applause.

Parking in the pitlane afterwards, he jumped up on the car to dance with an exaggerated swagger—imitative of what he would not say.

What he would remember most, he said, was "a little bit everything—the laps I did with the King in the normal car, with all the people enjoying seeing us together, then the start, the first laps... and for sure the last two or three." *Reuters*

RAFAEL Nadal exults after beating Roger Federer and claiming his 53rd straight clay victory. REUTERS

# Nadal asserts mastery of Federer, ties streak

ROME—RAFAEL NADAL BEAT Roger Federer in five sets Sunday to defend his Rome Masters title and tie Guillermo Vilas' record 53-match winning streak on clay in the Open era.

"It's something I don't think I'll ever do again," Nadal said of the record. "But it was more important to win the Rome title."

The second-ranked Spaniard saved two match points at 5-6 in the fifth set when Federer missed two forehands, then closed out the 6-7 (0), 7-6 (5), 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (5) win on his first match point in the tiebreaker when the top-ranked Swiss player hit another forehand long.

"I should have won. He caught me right at the finish line," said Federer, who also wasted a 4-1 lead in the fifth set.

The match lasted 5 hours, 5 minutes, and Nadal dropped down to the clay on his back in celebration after it was over.

Nadal has now beaten Federer in four straight matches, including in the semifinals of last year's French Open.

The Rome Masters is a clay-court warmup for Roland Garros, which begins in two weeks.

The 19-year-old Nadal began his streak at the Monte Carlo Masters in April 2005 and has now won nine straight tournaments on clay. His 16th title also tied him with Bjorn Borg for most titles won as a teenager.

"It's very difficult to win every tournament, 53 matches is a lot of matches," Nadal said.

Vilas set his streak in 1977, beginning with a win in May at the French Open and ending with a loss to Ilie Nastase in October in Aix en Provence, France.

Nadal can break the record with a win against Tommy Haas in the first round of the Hamburg Masters next week.

Nadal also won a fifth-set tiebreaker in last year's final, beating Guillermo Coria in 5:14—the longest final of the Open era.

"I think Federer was maybe tougher to beat. He's more aggressive and serves very well," Nadal said, eating his traditional post-match plate of pasta at Foro Italico. "I was lucky he missed those forehands."

Federer dropped to 39-3 this year, with his only losses coming to Nadal. The other two came in finals at Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in March and the Monte Carlo Masters last month.

Federer employed more aggressive tactics than the Monte Carlo final, when he lost serve seven times.

He only served and volleyed sparingly, but aimed for the corners and followed his baseline shots into the net at every opportunity. Nadal broke serve only three times. *AP*

# *Zico bares Japan WC squad*

TOKYO—JAPAN COACH ZICO ON MONday announced his squad for the World Cup, going with a team he hopes will be able to overcome recent goal-scoring problems.

Zico selected forwards Atsushi Yanagisawa, Masashi Oguro, Naohiro Takahara and Keiji Tamada to the 23-man squad.

Japan has had trouble scoring in recent friendlies. In their last tuneup matches on home soil, Zico's squad scored just one goal in two matches against Bulgaria and Scotland, two teams that failed to qualify for the World Cup.

Tatsuhiko Kubo was left off the team in favor of forward Seiichiro Maki.

Japan's midfield will include Europe-based players Hidetoshi Nakata (Bolton), Shunsuke Nakamura (Celtic) and Junichi Inamoto (West Bromwich Albion).

They will be joined by domestic players Takashi Fukunishi, Mitsuo Ogasawara, Yasuhito Endo and former Feyenoord player Shinji Ono.

On defense, Zico selected Alessandro Santos, Keisuke Tsuboi, Tsuneyasu Miyamoto, Yuji Nakazawa, Koji Nakata, Yuichi Komano, Makoto Tanaka and Akira Kaji.

Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, Seigo Narazaki and Yoichi Doi were selected as goalkeepers.

Japan is drawn in a tough Group F against Australia, Croatia and defending champion Brazil.

Japan advanced to the second round of the 2002 World Cup, which they co-hosted with South Korea.

They will be making their third straight World Cup appearance in Germany.

JAPAN'S head coach Zico of Brazil makes the announcement. REUTERS

**The squad:**

**Goalkeepers:** Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi (Jubilo Iwata), Yoichi Doi (FC Tokyo), Seigo Narazaki (Nagoya Grampus Eight); **Defenders:** Makoto Tanaka (Jubilo Iwata), Tsuneyasu Miyamoto (Gamba Osaka), Alessandro Santos (Urawa Reds), Yuji Nakazawa (Yokohama F Marinos), Keisuke Tsuboi (Urawa Reds), Akira Kaji (Gamba Osaka), Yuichi Komano (Sanfrecce Hiroshima), Koji Nakata (Basel, Switzerland); **Midfielders:** Takashi Fukunishi (Jubilo Iwata), Mitsuo Ogasawara (Kashima Antlers), Shinji Ono (Urawa Reds), Yasuhito Endo (Gamba Osaka), Hidetoshi Nakata (Bolton Wanderers, England), Shunsuke Nakamura (Celtic, Scotland), Junichi Inamoto (West Bromwich Albion, England); **Forwards:** Seiichiro Maki (JEF United Chiba), Keiji Tamada (Nagoya Grampus Eight), Atsushi Yanagisawa (Kashima Antlers), Masashi Oguro (Grenoble, France), Naohiro Takahara (Hamburg SV, Germany). *AP*

# Lady Tams take volley semis seat

**By Marc Anthony Reyes**

TEAM CAPTAIN MARY ANN MANalo unloaded 26 points, 24 of them on kills, as Far Eastern University overcame a sluggish first set to down Philippine Christian University, 16-25, 25-13, 25-16, 25-23, last night and grab a semifinal seat in the Shakey's V-League at the Blue Eagle gym.

The 5-foot-4, 22-year-old Manalo proved unstoppable as the Lady Tamaraws clinched their fourth win in six games while inflicting a third loss against three victories on PCU.

FEU joined unbeaten La Salle and Adamson in the double-round carryover semis phase starting next week.

Rachel Ann Daquis scored nine points, all of them on kills which helped the Lady Tams turn the tables on the Lady Dolphins, who caught them off-guard with a strong opening set.

Brenda Lopez and Arlene Bernardo led PCU's offensive in the first set, hammering home kills while combining for four blocks.

FEU finally got going as power-hitting Manalo started to score, eventually making 57 of her team's 167 total attempts.

"It's a good thing that we have the strength of character to get back," said FEU coach Florentino Santos, who also got ample help from Wendy Ann Semana, who had 31 of the team's 41 excellent sets.

# Webb seals 7-stroke wire-to-wire victory

KARRIE Webb gets doused in beer as she hugs her caddie, Mike Paterson.

WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA—Hall of Famer Karrie Webb fired a one-under 70 here Sunday to complete a convincing wire-to-wire victory in the $2.2 million-LPGA Michelob Ultra Open.

With a total of 14-under 270, the 31-year-old Australian finished seven shots in front of Mexico's Lorena Ochoa and South Korean Hee-Won Han, and pocketed the $330,000 first prize.

Filipino Jennifer Rosales closed with a 74 and finished with a 287. She won $15, 163.

While the early season LPGA buzz focused on the influx of talented young players, Webb—a three-time money list winner and two-time Player of the Year—has steadily reasserted herself.

Last year, Webb was winless on tour for the first time in her career.

But she became the first player to record multiple wins this season, having also captured the season's first major, the Kraft Nabisco Championship.

After a 66 on Saturday, Webb entered the final round with a five-shot lead, and she never showed any signs of coming back to the pack.

She birdied three and five before a brief lapse brought bogeys at the sixth and eighth.

"I played great all week," Webb said. "I was really nervous before we started today. I haven't played with that big a lead in a long time."

Webb closed the front nine with a birdie and followed a bogey at 15 with a birdie at 16. *AFP*

# ENTERTAINME

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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**ANNE Curtis: More than friends, less than sweethearts.**

# Anne Curtis gets back her groove

## ... with a lot of help from Luis Manzano

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ANNE CURTIS SEEMS ON THE VERGE OF tears as she pleads with reporters not to ask about her love life—specifically, her breakup five months ago with boyfriend of two years Paolo Araneta.

"As much as possible, I don't want to talk about it because Paolo is not in show biz and I respect his family."

But inquiring minds prevail. Was it a third party? Did Paolo really knock up the other girl?

This makes the 21-year-old break her silence: "That's not true!"

And it's unfair to blame her hectic schedule as the culprit, she adds. "[My job] was never a factor. It was difficult because I seldom saw him. I was working very hard and he wasn't used to that."

She's a hard worker, she points out, because "I want to be financially stable. I don't want to depend on my future husband."

Anne adds that it was her former boyfriend, 10 years her senior, who encouraged her to strike while the iron was hot, save up and invest her earnings wisely.

"I learned a lot from him," she tells INQUIRER Entertainment. "He's such a wise person. He had a good effect on me. He taught me not to splurge on shopping. To be professional. To manage my time well. To rest when I'm off from work. He helped me mature in a lot of ways. It was just that, sometimes it was too much for my age. But I will always love him."

### Back to school

She was also inspired to go back to school.

This summer, Anne enrolled as a high school senior at the College of Mount Carmel.

"Our principal assured me that I'm smart; it's just that I'm lazy," she says. "The night before an algebra exam, my nose bled. I asked myself: Is this because of the heat or the tension?"

Fortunately, "I aced the test, but I still have a lot of catching up to do because I stopped schooling for years."

Between work and studies, she has no time for romance, Anne sighs. Which leaves "Star Circle Summer Kid Quest" co-host and "All About Love" co-star Luis Manzano at a disadvantage.

She insists: "He never tried to court me [after the breakup with Paolo]. He helps me cope. When I feel depressed or sluggish, he cheers me up and pushes me on. I don't want to risk the friendship that we've had for the past six years."

It's special, she concedes. "More than friends; but not sweethearts. I don't care if he's not my future groom's friend, when I get married, he'll be my Man of Honor."

She calls him "Manzano"; he calls her "Nippy."

"It's a six-year secret," she says of their pet names.

Could it be "Nippy" because the romance was "nipped in the bud"?

They're very close, is as far as she will go. There was a time when they were each other's alarm clocks. "He'd call at 6 a.m., just to hear me mumble my reply."

Manzano describes "Nippy" glowingly: "She's obviously beautiful and some people equate that with being *sosyal* (aloof), but she's a cowgirl (down-to-earth)!"

**MARK, Jennylyn, Jolina and Marvin in the Big Apple.**

## *New York state of mind*

### DOLLY WOOD

*Dolly Ann Carvajal*

IN THE CITY THAT NEVER sleeps, love is awakened for screen pairs **Jolina Magdangal** and **Marvin Agustin**,and **Jennylyn Mercado** and **Mark Herras** in the Kapuso Network's newest offering, "I Luv NY," Monday to Friday on GMA's primetime block.

Set in the romantic city of New York, it's the first Philippine soap to use a world-class location as backdrop. Viewers will be swept off their feet by this double dose of romance, as it features the much-awaited reunion of the two love teams.

Anything new that blossomed between Jolens and Marvs, Jen and Mark over there Mark quipped, " *'Di man kami nagkabalikan ni* Jen, *'di naman kami nagkalayo*. We don't want to make the same mistakes all over again. Graduate *na kami sa away-bati* stage."

Jen agreed, "We had only each other to turn to in New York. No *alalays* and all, so we made sure not to fight. We watched over each other especially when we both got sick."

As for Jolina, her boyfriend **Bebong Munoz**, who's based in the US, flew to NYC to visit her. "I thought I'd feel awkward when Bebong and Marvs met," she said. "But it was Marvs who felt uneasy at first. Bebong supports my loveteam

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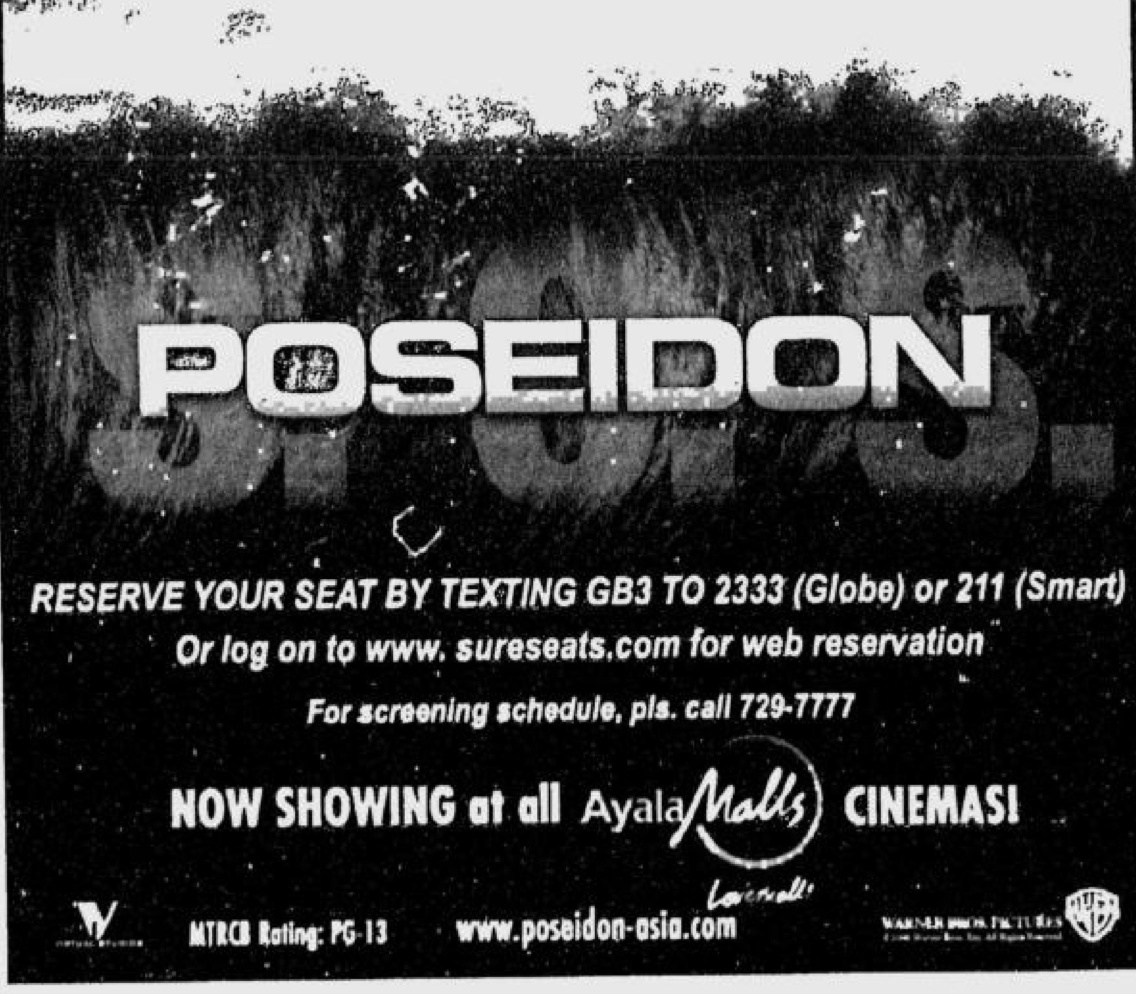

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# New York state of mind

From page A2-1

with Marvs 'cause he knows that we go a long way back."

Marvin shared, "There are a lot of things that Jolens and I did in New York that we'd never done before, like changing clothes in one van during shooting. I served as her curtain (*hehehe..*) The scenes we did are so beautiful to watch but so hard to make, especially when it was snowing. *Hirap mag*-dialogue while you're trembling in the cold!"

So even if the two pairs are not back together for real, their foray in the Big Apple has made them realize that they remain to be the apple of each other's eyes in a platonic sort of way—that plateau between friendship and love.

**THE CAST of "Manay Po"**

## 'Manay Po'

Motherhood will display never-before-seen shades of gay in the comedy film "Manay Po," from Regal Entertainment. It's about a mother (**Cherry Pie Picache**) who discovers that all her three sons are homosexuals—a closet gay played by **Polo Ravales**, a flamboyant gay portrayed by **John Prats**, and **Jiro Manio** as an emerging adolescent gay.

I can completely relate to that because of my gay son **IC Mendoza**, who's in the cast. **Mother Lily**, however, emphasizes that the movie isn't just for gays. "Everyone knows what it's like to be attracted to another person and to keep secrets from those they love. It's also about the unconditional love that a mom has for her kids," Mother says.

Director non-pareil **Joel Lamangan** joked, "It's not a comedy version of 'Brokeback Mountain.'" Catch the rib-tickling, eyebrow-plucking Mother's Gay presentation on May 31.

## Guy-Pip reunion?

If plans don't miscarry, **Nora Aunor** and **Tirso Cruz** will shoot a digital film in the US, possibly with lovers **Judy Ann Santos** and **Ryan Agoncillo**. But according to Pipo, he hasn't received any formal offer yet. Guy and Pip going digital? What a timeless love team, indeed!

## Split *na sila*?

Could it be true that **Alessandra de Rossi** and **Jeremy Marquez** have split up? I texted Jeremy to ask for the real score but he hasn't replied. Hopefully, it's just a stage in their relationship. Sometimes lovers have to be apart to see what they had together.

## Fashion show

In celebration of Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall's 15th anniversary, this year's batch of Generation East finalists will hold a Summer Fashion Show tomorrow at the mall's Entertainment Center. Find out what's in this summer as the finalists model the latest from Chili and MYX Wear.

The Generation East 2006 Model Search finals night for the mall's next image models is on June 3.

## Readers' corner

This is a reaction to your "Dollywood" column where you asked whether **Sam Milby's** "Close to You" composition is a rip-off of Wannadies' "You and Me" song.

"Close to You" is the carrier single of Sam Milby's self-titled album. I have a copy and the album's lyric sheet clearly

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2 POSEIDON

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1 M. I. - 3
2 POSEIDON
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2 POSEIDON
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1 POSEIDON PG13 2:25,4:45,7:05,9:25
2 POSEIDON PG13 1:40,4:00,6:20,8:40
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 12:45,3:30,6:15,9:00
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 1:45,4:30,7:15,10:00
5 AQUAMARINE G 2:20,4:40,7:00,9:20
6 POSEIDON PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10
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CINEMA 4 POSEIDON 11:10, 1:30, 3:50, 6:10, 8:30, 10:50 PG13
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AQUAMARINE 7:15 / 9:30
THE WILD 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00
SILENT HILL 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40
REINCARNATION 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:20
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:40 / 1:20 / 2:00 / 3:20 4:00 / 4:40 / 6:00 / 6:40 7:20 / 8:40 / 9:20 / 10:00
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1 POSEIDON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: 3 12:25 / 3:05 / 5:45 / 8:25
3 AQUAMARINE 12:05 R3 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20
4 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR 12:00 R2 / 1:50 / 4:00 / 6:10 / 8:20
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3 POSEIDON 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10 30 PG-13
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:10 PG-13

stated that Close to You is written by **Mike Villegas**, not Sam Milby. Sam is just the singer and never claimed to be the composer of the song in question. The two cuts in the album credited to Sam as composer are "Magmahal Muli" and "I've Fallen in Love." From: **Nicole Dizon** (nicolehd@lycos.com)

SAM Milby

### Fuming Gwen

Gwen Garci is fuming mad at her ex-boyfriend **Andrew Wolfe**: "No woman, or any human being for that matter, deserves to be treated the way he treated me. Every time we fight, he strangles me and spits in my face. That's why I scratch him with my nails—to defend myself. And he has the nerve to say on TV that he will sue me? *Ang laki-laki ng katawan niya tapos palalabasin niyang* I assaulted him first!"

Is it really the end of the line for these two, or is it just part of their love-hate routine?

Gwen swears that it's *finito*. Or will she turn out to be a girl who cried "Wolfe?"

### Sam's surprise

Sam Milby paid **Toni Gonzaga** a surprise visit at the studio when we were doing "ETK" last weekend. He brought Toni *pasalubong* from the US—a jailed doll (Alcatraz souvenir), a frame with their picture in it, chocolates and a lot of knickknacks. I teased Toni, "Why the incarcerated doll? Does it mean Sam wants you to be his prisoner of love?"

Toni blushed. Who would mind being sentenced for life as Sam's beloved?

### High spirits

Rudy Fernandez was in high spirits when my *kapatid* **Ogie Diaz, Alma Moreno** and **Mark Anthony Fernandez** spoke to him via a phone patch on "ETK." Daboy happily announced that he has fully recovered from his critical operation. He is raring to go back to work. I'm sure everyone is also raring to see an energized and revitalized Rudy.

### Personal

Thanks, Doc D, for curing my lovesickness!

*(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)*

## sh, no…

From page A2-4

Barrett's single-mother Maggie and her 9-year-old son, Conor (Jimmy Bennett), but even they're not fleshed out sufficiently in the script from Mark Protosevich to make us feel for them.

Everyone's plight quickly grows repetitive. They climb a bit, they get soaked, someone almost drowns, something explodes, they climb some more—all to the tune of overblown, frenzied music.

"There's got to be a morning after," went the Oscar-winning song from the original. In "Poseidon," daylight can't come soon enough. *Christy Lemire, AP*

---

## ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

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### GALLERIA 632-9116

1 POSEIDON • THX
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

3 REINCARNATION
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 POSEIDON
11:40 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00

5 POSEIDON
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30

6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

7 AQUAMARINE
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

8 SILENT HILL
2:00 4:40 7:20

9 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

10 SLITHER
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

### ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 POSEIDON
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 10:00

2 SLITHER
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

3 SILENT HILL
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 9:50

4 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 REINCARNATION
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 POSEIDON
12:00 2:10 4:20 6:40 9:00

### METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SLITHER
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:20 1:50 4:20 6:50 9:15

3 SUBMERGED
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 AQUAMARINE
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 SILENT HILL
1:30 4:30 6:10 9:00

6 POSEIDON
12:10 2:10 4:10 6:10 8:10

7 POSEIDON
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:10

8 REINCARNATION
1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20

### NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 POSEIDON
3 SILENT HILL
4 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
5 POSEIDON
6 SLITHER

### CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 POSEIDON
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

### PIONEER 687-5378

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2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 REINCARNATION
4 SILENT HILL

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3 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
4 POSEIDON

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2 POSEIDON
3 MURDER
4 SLITHER
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1 POSEIDON
2 SUBMERGED
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

### ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 SILENT HILL
4 POSEIDON

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1 BANDIDAS
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 POSEIDON
4 SUBMERGED

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1 SILENT HILL
2 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
3 SUBMERGED
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
5 POSEIDON
6 POSEIDON

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2 THE WILD
3 POSEIDON
4 SLITHER
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4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
5 APOY SA DIBDIB NG SAMAR
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M:I:III
CHINESE TALL STORY
APOYSA DIBDIB NGSAMAR
POSEIDON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
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ICE AGE 2
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PAMAHIIN

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SILENT HILL
POSEIDON

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M:i:III
M:i:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
THE WILD
D LUCKY ONES

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SILENT HILL
EIGHT BELOW
D LUCKY ONES
PAMAHIIN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
M:i:III
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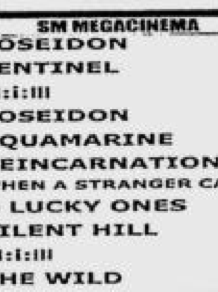

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M:I:III

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M:i:III
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PAMAHIIN
M:i:III
POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
M:i:III
POSEIDON
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AQUAMARINE

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SHAGGY DOG
POSEIDON
M:i:III
SHE'S THE MAN

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THE WILD
M:i:III
NORTH COUNTRY
POSEIDON

SM CITY CLARK
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THE WILD
M:i:III
SILENT HILL
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SUBMERGED

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POSEIDON
SILENT HILL
GRANDMA'S BOY

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WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
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M:i:III

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D LUCKY ONES
THE DARK
M:i:III
POSEIDON

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THE WILD
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POSEIDON
THE WILD
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M:i:III

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# TV channels riding on 'signature shows'

**VIEWFINDER**

*Nestor U. Torre*

PEOPLE WHO HEAR THAT ABC 5 could be spending P100 million on its projected "Philippine Idol" show may think that's an alarmingly huge amount of money, but network staffers would disagree.

Aside from the pricey franchise fee paid for permission to come up with the Pinoy version of "American Idol," the new program gives ABC 5 a "signature" show that can be used to boost the channel's image, appeal and cachet, and galvanize its entire programming.

By that yardstick, P100 million isn't as huge an investment as it seems.

The concept of "signature" shows has worked well for GMA 7, with its "Starstruck" challenge, and ABS-CBN with its "Pinoy Big Brother" franchise.

Those programs are popular in their own right, but their significance goes beyond that, to giving their respective networks their unique identity and character in viewers' estimation.

If handled right, "Philippine Idol" could do the same for ABC 5, and thus help it stave off the competition for local TV's No.3 slot provided by the new QTV 11.

At this point, the challenge facing "Philippine Idol" is to make a name for itself beyond its being the local version of "AI."

There are so many local talent guests on TV that the new program will have to work really hard to avoid ending up as just another singing tilt.

The major difference has to be the exceptionally high level of singing talent and potential star value that the show can attract. The show's 24 then 12 finalists have to be much better than the talents we already get to see and hear on past and current singing competitions.

How can this happen? Aside from the usual open auditions, the show's staffers should look onto our wealth of musical-theater talents, some of whom have yet to be discovered on TV, but are truly exceptional.

It's also important that "Philippine Idol" refrains from the bad practice of some local talent searches of "accommodating" the "requests" of network officials, talent managers and other "hidden persuaders" to include their preferred talents in their lists of finalists.

This usually lowers the tilts' talent level, and keeps some really gifted singers from making it to the finals, as they deserve.

It would also help if the "Philippine Idol" finalists first be "workshopped" to further hone their talents before the final's competition proper starts.

We have many potentially great talents who are still too raw to do as well as they should in a competition, so a workshop would really help.

Can "Philippine Idol" come up with these innovations before its official start?

## Feedback

From **Arnold C. Dalena** of Pasay City: "Keep up your analysis of industry trends. They are very useful for Mass Com students like me. We take up your articles in class because they give us an in-depth view of the field we want to enter—with open eyes.

"Can you also write about radio? I want to work in that field, because it reaches down to the grassroots..."

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JOSH Lucas, Emmy Rossum and Kurt Russell star in "Poseidon"

# All splash, no substance

In this remake of the 1972 disaster classic, the characters make sympathy nearly impossible.

**REVIEW**

NEW YORK—LONG BEFORE THE BIG wave hits in "Poseidon," the first sign of trouble comes from looking at the cast list.

Josh Lucas, Kurt Russell, Emmy Rossum, Jacinda Barrett—they're all too good-looking. Not an Ernest Borgnine or a Shelley Winters among 'em.

This pretty much tells you all you need to know about director Wolfgang Petersen's remake of the 1972 cult disaster classic "The Poseidon Adventure": It's all splash and no substance. Not a single person is physically capable of uttering anything like Winters' famous line, "In the water, I'm a very skinny lady," which she delivered before her character died quite convincingly of a heart attack. (You laugh, but the performance earned her an Oscar nomination, one of eight the film received.)

Not that you're looking for much meat in an underwater blockbuster; you want to be visually wowed. Here, the effects are so big and shiny and slick they often look completely fake, like some computer-generated promotional video for a cruise line.

Up close in cramped, soaked quarters, though, Petersen does know how to create a visceral sensation of claustrophobia—which by now seems to be his specialty, having also directed "Das Boot" and "The Perfect Storm."

But it would be helpful to care about whether or not these scrappy passengers on a doomed New Year's voyage drown once the boat capsizes; in this contemporized version, the characters are rendered so shrilly and superficially, they make sympathy nearly impossible.

Say what you will about director Ronald Neame's original; in retrospect it does look campy, with Borgnine and Gene Hackman sopping wet and screaming at each other, and Carol Lynley, as the ship's lounge singer, traipsing around in short-shorts and go-go boots. The film cared about character development. You got to know the members of this motley crew as they banded together and climbed frantically through the upside-down vessel, searching for an escape.

(And the film was considered spectacular in its day, so much so that it earned a special-achievement Oscar for visual effects.)

This time you have Lucas, in one of the all-time, laugh-out-loud bad performances as smug professional gambler Dylan Johns, competing for control of the group with Russell's Robert Ramsey, who's mocked for his famous bravery as a former firefighter who became New York City mayor. (Learning his identity drew unintended guffaws from critics in Manhattan.)

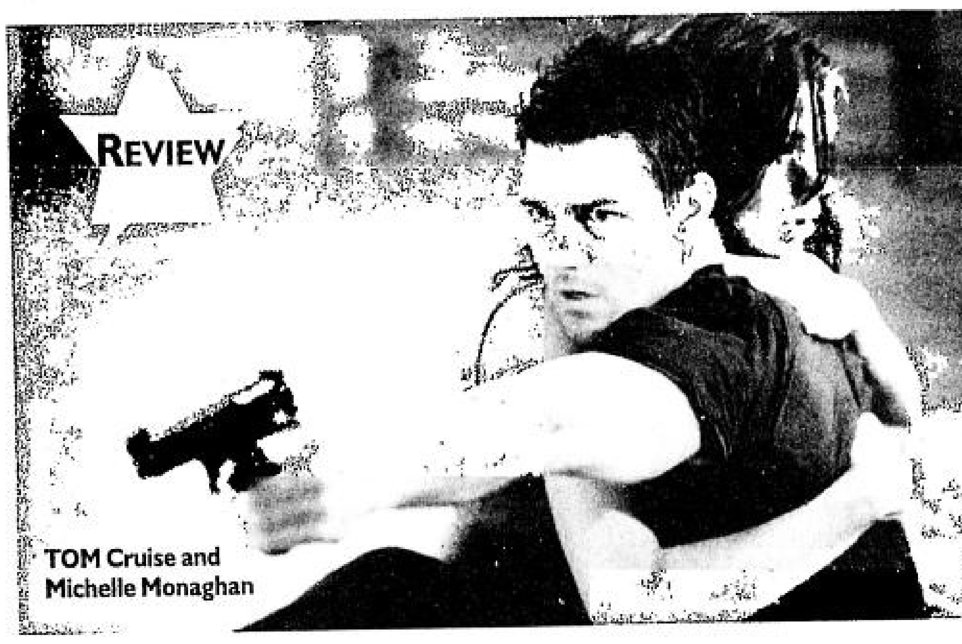
Rossum plays Ramsey's spoiled, impudent daughter, who pouts about wanting to marry her boyfriend (blonde pretty-boy Mike Vogel) during some of the most intense moments of crisis. Kevin Dillon plays an obnoxious drunk named Lucky Larry who's almost as pathetic as Dillon's "Entourage" character.

Richard Dreyfuss, among the strongest actors in this thing, is relegated to whining and sniveling after his character's boyfriend leaves him for another man, then whining and sniveling some more as the situation grows more dire. And Andre Braugher, who was so great for so long on "Homicide: Life on the Street," just stands around feebly as the ballroom floods—and he's playing the ship's captain.

The only vaguely likable characters are

ALL/ A2-2

# Tom plays Cruise all over again



TOM Cruise and Michelle Monaghan

NEW YORK—TOM CRUISE IS SO MUCH more than just tabloid fodder and the father of Katie Holmes' baby.

Sometimes he's also a movie star—"the most exciting and successful star in the world," according to the hype for "Mission: Impossible III," which isn't so much the latest sequel in an astronomical summer franchise as it is a replay of some of Cruise's best-known hits.

Taking over as director after Brian De Palma and John Woo, J.J. Abrams does put his own enormously successful stylistic stamp on the series. "MI:3" often feels like an extended, sweeps-period episode of Abrams' "Alias"; the action moves so swiftly and skillfully, you don't realize you're watching a two-hour-plus film.

Abrams, who also created the TV series "Felicity" and "Lost," tries to instill within these characters an interior life we hadn't seen in the previous two films. (Cruise's Secret Agent Ethan Hunt keeps his identity hidden from his fiancée by pretending he's a traffic analyst—yeah, right—when he's actually off on adventures with his partners, played by Ving Rhames, Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Maggie Q. And as you'd expect, some of the toys and twists are coolly clever and amusing.

But time and time again, Cruise goes back to being Cruise, which distracts you from the fact that he's supposed to be a spy trying to track down and take out international weapons dealer Owen Davian (played by Philip Seymour Hoffman—that's right, the Academy Award winner).

A scene at an airport finds Cruise disguised as an overgrown hippie in a knit cap, denim jacket and bad facial hair, as if he'd just left the set of "Born on the Fourth of July." Later we see him prowling the dark hallways of a shabby Shanghai apartment building, like something out of "Minority Report."

He's constantly running, which also is reminiscent of "Minority Report" and its mantra, "Everybody runs," or any number of Cruise vehicles, including "The Firm" and "Jerry Maguire." This phenomenon of self-reference only serves as a reminder of how little range Cruise has.

Not that you're looking for range when you walk into a movie like this. No, you want explosions. You want car chases and shootouts. You want dazzling, gravity-defying stunt games.

So far, I'm enjoying this. *Christy Lemire, AP*

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# Group unveils ₱8-B blueprint for Boni 'city center'

ALI chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Evergreen Holdings chair Joselito Campos, FBDC president Gen. Narciso Abaya, ALI president Jaime Ayala and BCDA chair Fildelfo Rojas view the scale model of the "city center."

## Gives up 6 hectares of saleable land under new master plan

**By Elizabeth L. Sanchez**

FORT BONIFACIO DEVELOPMENT CORP. (FBDC), a joint venture between the Ayala and Campos groups, unveiled yesterday a new P8-billion blueprint for the "city center" of the 240-hectare Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City.

The "city center" forms the physical core of the project and consists of high-tech offices, residential buildings, bustling retail outlets, and pedestrian-friendly roads and walkways. It is bounded by 32nd Street on the north, 11th Avenue on the east, 26th Street on the south and 5th Avenue on the west.

The P8-billion financing program will be spent over a period of 20 years and funded through internally generated cash and sale of lots, said Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), one of the controlling partners at FBDC.

GROUP/ B2

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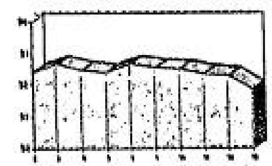

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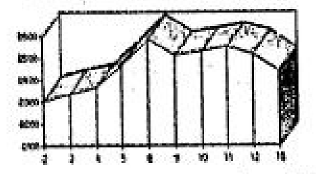


(See stock market report on Page B2)

## Shares fall 3.16% on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.16-PERCENT lower in their sharpest fall for nearly a year as investors took profits across the board after a 20-plus percent run-up this year, dealers said.

They said the region as a whole sold off following losses on Wall Street late last week on

SHARES/ B2

## WHAT'S INSIDE

**UCPB unit lends P2B to small coconut farmers** /B3

**DOF studies flat income tax rate proposal** /B6

# T-bill bids rejected; 91-day yield rises to 5%

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE GOVERNMENT PARTIALLY REJECTED bids for treasury bills yesterday to keep the increase in interest rates at "reasonable" levels following pressure from the market to jack up the rates.

The bellwether 91-day treasury bill rate, used by banks as a benchmark in pricing loans, rose by 23.2 basis points to 5 percent.

The Bureau of the Treasury accepted only P450 million worth of bids, lower than the programmed debt offering of P1 billion for each maturity. Total bids for the 91-day paper reached P2.285 billion.

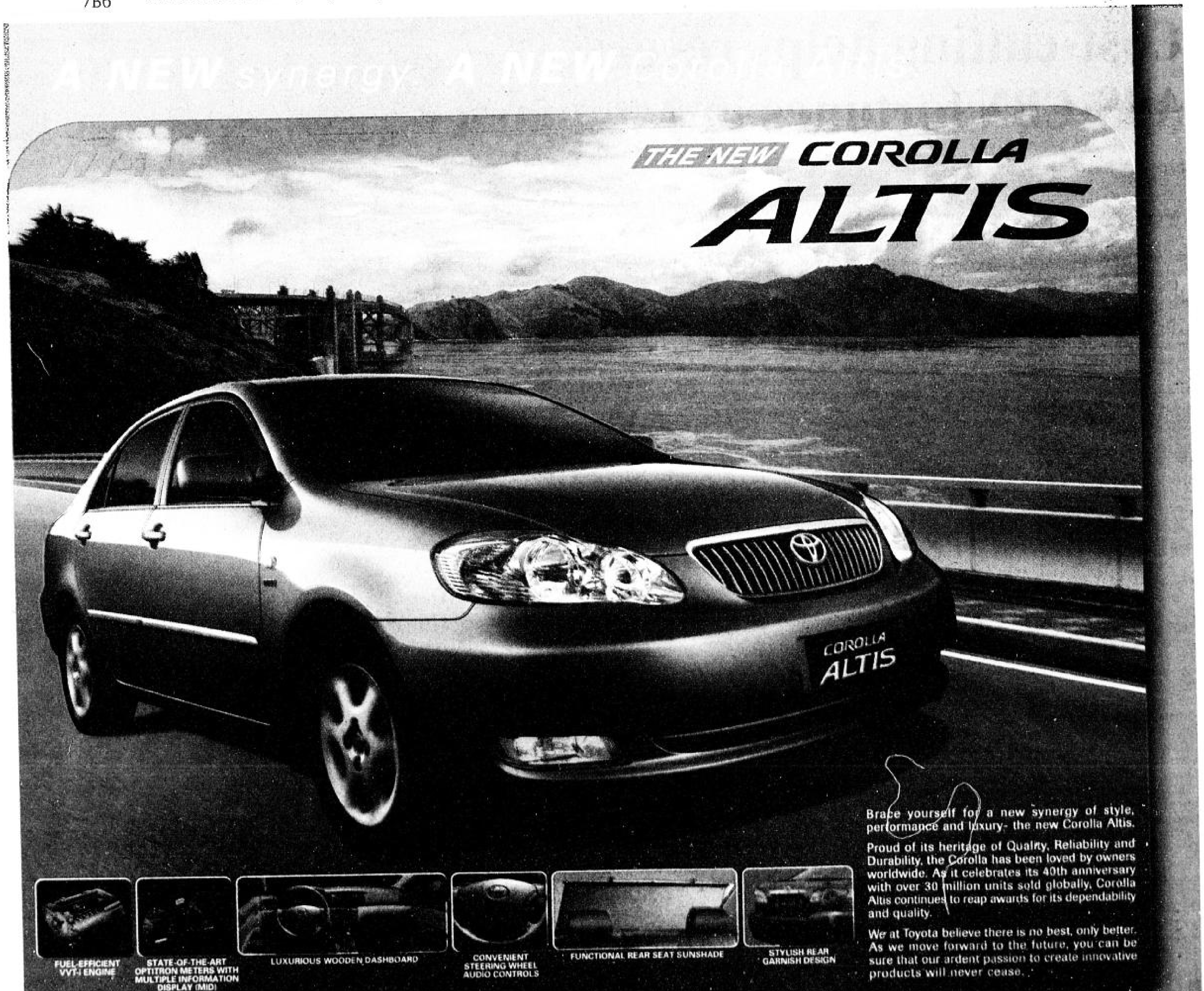
Had the Treasury accepted all bids for the three-month securities, the rate would have gone up to 5.271 percent.

The 182-day bills fetched 5.734 percent, 15.2 basis points higher than the previous rate of 5.582 percent.

Tenders for the six-month government securities reached P2.9 billion, but the government accepted only P950 million.

The rate for the 364-day bills increased by 15.6 basis points to 5.955 percent. The government accepted only P250 million worth of tenders compared with the P2.7 billion worth of bids raised by banks.

"This (partial rejection of bids) was done to restore market order and allow a little increase in the rates," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a press briefing after the auction.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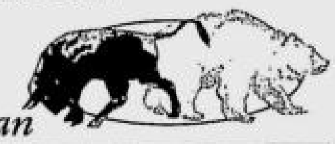
# A weak dollar is good for gold

### MR. BEARBULL



*Ron Nathan*

WITH THE MARKET SO ACTIVE AND volatile, I think it is time to abandon the jokes, at least until the market becomes boring again. However, I must tell you of one extraordinary incident. My daughter still has a baby tooth, hanging by a thread, bleeding slightly but refusing to fall out. She was scared to go to the dentist so I suggested putting a piece of thread around it and tying it to the doorknob. She then held the chair tightly while I slammed the door. You know what happened? The doorknob came off.

* * *

I am very pleased with the degree of risk factor, which a week ago reached such a high level that it threatened to disappear through the top of the monitor. I was totally convinced that the Phisix had reached its high and felt compelled to write it in the INQUIRER and the newsletter. The next day, the Phisix fell 78 points and I feel that it has further downside. Indeed, I see the index heading down towards the 2,400 level so I see no point in entering the equity market at the moment. Seven stocks made double or declining tops, which is a bearish sign. This article was written on Sunday and the Phisix dropped another 79 points yesterday. The timing of this indicator is extraordinary.

Some of the results that came out last Friday were uninspiring. ALI announced profits up by only 1 percent from P1.16 billion to P1.18 billion. The 21-percent fall in sales from P6.92 billion to P5.46 billion was due to a smaller gain from selling shares in a company that owns part of the MRT. It had a net gain of P608 million compared with P2.59 billion a year earlier. Residential sales grew 43 percent, shopping malls 18 percent and hotel revenue 9 percent. Expenses fell 26 percent. The analysts will have a lot of sorting out to do. The shares fell 50 centavos to P13.75.

AC did rather better with 1st quarter profits up 23 percent on stronger earnings by BPI and GLOBE. Profits rose from P2.5 billion to P3.1 billion. The chair, Zobel de Ayala II said, "Profit growth can be sustained, supported by a positive trend in the macro-economic environment. Subsidiaries BPI reported a gain of 27 percent AND GLOBE 19 percent." It will be interesting to see how both companies fare on Monday, as the results came out after hours. AC fell P25 to P422.50.

TEL was disappointing, posting a decline of 7 percent despite adding about 600,000 new subscribers. 3G mobile phones are rather expensive, so the company has been offering free trials in an attempt to induce customers to trade up. It will probably take 2 to 3 years before TEL and GLOBE will benefit from the new technology. Meanwhile, they have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars. This was my first recommendation in the INQUIRER at P226 and it has risen almost 10 times. Time to cash out.

PCOR said that first-quarter profits rose 16 percent as rising exports countered falling demand. Net income was P1 billion and sales volume increased by 8 percent. Domestic sales have been flat because of rising crude oil prices. The company is spending $200 million on a refinery, which will boost earnings in 2008 when it will expands its exports of various petrochemicals. These will have a higher profit margin than crude oil.

Profit of GSMI, a unit of SMC, was down from P368 million to P229 million. Revenue only dropped slightly from P3.04 billion to P2.94 billion, so margins were greatly affected by the increase in VAT. Taken as a whole, these results are not the stuff of which bull markets are made.

The mining market, both metals and oil surged with large gains in PX, AT, APX, PERC and OV. PX has now surpassed my target of P4.80 to P5.60 and hit a high of P5.90 last Friday. Given the price of gold and copper, I am now increasing my 1-year target to P6.40, i.e. an EPS of 80 centavos and a P/E ratio of 8.

One stock that has not participated in the rise is MA. There has been no news and the shares have hardly traded all week at .026. LC appears to have solved some of its problems and the shares have moved up modestly so MA could be next. There are reports that 3 bidders are waiting to bid for the land adjoining Philex so it is a question of getting the company to make amends with Minister Reyes. They behaved badly so it is up to them to eat humble pie. I feel that it is a question of when, rather than if, they will get a permit. The downside is small but the upside could be considerable. This is not an invitation to BUY or SELL the shares and I do not hold any stock in the company.

The dollar has been extremely weak over the past 2 months and I believe the downtrend will continue. This is good for all commodities, especially gold, which tends to be bought in times of uncertainly as a safe haven against a deteriorating dollar or the threat of inflation. The US economy is surprisingly resilient, but there are signs of inflation creeping in, certainly enough for FED Chair BERNANKE to indicate that there may be further interest rate hikes to come.

JP MORGAN expects gold to reach $800 on ounce, and a group of strategists on BLOOMBERG expects gold to reach $850 next year. I am inclined to agree with them and any correction in the mining sector would be an opportunity to accumulate stocks, such as PX.

CLSA said, "There could be some hiccups, but the trend of more money coming into Asia will continue because ASIA is where the long-term growth is and Americans are beginning to realize that." The sectors with the greatest growth potential are: The mining sector where billions of dollars are waiting to be invested; and the business outsourcing centers, which have diversified their interests in order to use their space during the day time.

* * *

Over the past six years, four years with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, I have answered about 98 percent of all the e-mails addressed to me. These are from readers who ask for opinions on stocks, commodities, forex, technical analysis courses, books, whether their children should go into stockbroking, the US market, local bonds, mutual funds, etc.

Because of the active and rising market, the number of inquiries now exceeds 50 a day, and as I do not have a secretary and I type with one finger until far into the night, I have decided that enough is enough. So, for the time being, at least, I will not be answering any more queries. In any event, these should be directed to your stockbroker. He is not there simply to execute orders; he should also provide a service.

# Cost-cutting helps reverse ABS-CBN fortunes in 1st quarter

By Daxim L. Lucas

A MASSIVE RETRENCHMENT IN 2005 AND aggressive cost-cutting helped the country's biggest broadcasting firm post a profit in the first quarter, reversing a net loss reported in the same period last year, the company said yesterday.

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. also presented to analysts and media its acting chief financial officer, who replaced longtime CFO Randolph Estrellado, the person credited by many in steering the company through some of the direst financial straits in its history.

Acting CFO Geronimo C. Estacio said that it was his second time to hold the position, having been ABS-CBN's top finance manager until 1999 before Estrellado came on board.

"Randy [Estrellado] is a very good man," he said when asked about his predecessor's reason for leaving. "He left to pursue other interests outside of the industry."

It remains unclear how Estrellado's departure will affect the company's relationship with its creditors, many of whom deal with him directly. The company has more than P4.4 billion worth of long- and short-term debts with various creditor-banks.

During the briefing, Estacio highlighted the moves taken by the company to post a P121-million profit in the first quarter of 2006, compared with a P132-million loss during the same period last year.

"The turnaround is attributable to a lower cost base brought about by last year's headcount optimization as well as more judicious production cost spending," the company added in a statement.

Estacio warned, however, that the first-quarter performance of the company was "not indicative" of how it would perform for the rest of the year.

"Even during the good old days of ABS-CBN, the first quarter was never indicative of full-year performance," he said.

Airtime revenues improved by 4 percent as the company continued to improve its hold on the primetime slots. Revenues were also boosted by license fees from the migration of North American direct-to-home subscribers to DirecTV's platform, the company added.

Gross revenues rose by 14 percent year-on-year to P3.9 billion, driven by fees from DirecTV and higher airtime revenues. Gross airtime revenues reached P2.2 billion, up 4 percent compared to P2.1 billion in the first quarter of last year.

"Although ratings were almost flat year-on-year at 14 percent in the first quarter, parent airtime revenues grew 3 percent due to a recovery in the primetime ratings in Metro Manila specifically in the 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. block," the company added.

Total expenses increased by 4 percent to P3.7 billion on the back of higher cash operating expenses.

"These expenses, however, include a nonrecurring charge amounting to P208 million in marketing expenses related to migration in DirecTV," it added.

Without this nonrecurring item, total expenses were down 2 percent year-on-year to P3.5 billion.

# Group unveils P8-B blueprint . . .

From page B1

Dubbed as a "city that works," FBDC vice chair and concurrent ALI chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala said the new master plan for the 36-hectare "city center" would feature five critical elements. These are: A road network with a grid layout that would allow for more efficient traffic management as opposed to the old current circular road network; ample parking spaces for current and future requirements; fully planned, integrated and managed transport system such as dedicated bus lanes and pedestrian walkways that will make it easy to access and travel around the community; significant portions of land allotted for a number of landscaped areas throughout the city and making each reconfigured lot in the city center a "prime" space.

"Our vision for (the Global City) is that it will be a dynamic, thoroughly modern, district and community that will feature a mix of commercial, residential and retail land uses," Zobel said.

ALI executive vice president Vincent Tan admitted that the full implementation of the master plan would result in a significant loss of saleable land area of more than 6 hectares. Lots within the area was last sold at P140,000 a square meter.

"In revising the master plan for the city center, we actually lost a significant amount of saleable land, not a decision any businessman makes lightly. But the plan we now have works better in all respects. Its rectangular street grid leads to reduced traffic congestion, more lots with regular shapes and better distribution of amenities. For all this, the loss of saleable land is a price we are quite willing to pay," Tan said.

One of the anchor features of the new Bonifacio Global City master plan is a P600-million retail project dubbed "Promenade," which will be opened by December.

The Promenade strip, which is 40 meters wide and 500 meters long, or as wide as Ayala Avenue, will be lined up with more than 80 retail shops and restaurants.

Filadelfo Rojas, chair of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, said a number of embassies have expressed their desire to locate in Bonifacio Global City.

ALI officials confirmed that the Singapore Embassy has acquired a 10,800-square-meter lot within the Global City. Construction of its new headquarters may start within the third quarter this year.

# Shares fall 3.16% . . .

From page B1

fresh concerns over the outlook for the dollar and interest rates.

At this stage, the losses look to be no more than healthy profit-taking in a market at near seven-year highs which will allow some consolidation and then a resumed advance but investors will still be nervous to see stocks stabilize.

The composite index lost 79.47 points to 2,438.73, after trading between 2.419.81 and 2,507.88. This was the steepest fall since July 4 last year, when it lost 79.58 points or 4.20 percent.

Volume was 2.93 billion shares worth P2.7 billion.

Losers beat gainers 199 to 23, with 35 stocks unchanged.

"This sharp correction is healthy and acceptable. In fact, it is very much welcome," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

The market had riser more than 20 percent since the start of the year, with the run-up accelerating in the past two weeks, when it went up by more than 7 percent. *AFP*

# Online broker sets IPO in June

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) has approved the application of online broker CitisecOnline.com to register its securities, paving the way for the company to pursue an initial public offering this year.

In its application filed with the SEC, CitisecOnline said it plans to offer 110 million shares at between P1 and P1.50 apiece. This will raise roughly P110 million to P165 million in gross proceeds for the online broker.

The shares to be offered represent 25.6 percent of CitisecOnline's total issued and outstanding capital.

The proceeds after deducting expenses will be used for working capital requirements, capital expenditure, advertising and marketing expenses, the expansion of its business center as well as fund education plans.

Capital requirements this year are estimated at P53.5 million.

After its proposed offer, CitisecOnline will have a total of 430 million in issued and outstanding shares or a market capital of between P430 million and P645 million using the company's proposed IPO price range.

Total assets—consisting of cash, property and its trading right—as of December 2005 stood at P457.6 million. It incurred a consolidated net loss of P2.04 million in 2005.

CitisecOnline will be the first purely online equities trader to list on the bourse by June this year.

The company was incorporated in 1999 and began commercial operations in 2001.

It wanted to tap Filipino investors overseas through its online trading and information services.

## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 15, 2006)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FINANCIAL | | | | | |
| BANKS | | | | | |
| Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc. | 7 | 7 | 6.7 | 6.8 | 90,000 |
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 37.5 | 37.5 | 36 | 36 | 342,200 |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 68 | 68 | 65.5 | 66.5 | 1,895,200 |
| China Banking Corp. | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 910 |
| Citystate Savings Bank | 20.25 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 300 |
| Export and Ind. Bank A | 0.46 | 0.46 | 0.44 | 0.45 | 4,520,000 |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 71 | 71.5 | 70 | 71 | 278,600 |
| International Exch. Bank | 39.5 | 40 | 39.5 | 40 | 70,000 |
| Metropolitan Bank & Trust | 43 | 43 | 39.5 | 40.5 | 616,400 |
| Philippine National Bank | 37 | 37 | 36.5 | 36.5 | 32,300 |
| Phil. Savings Bank | 39 | 39.5 | 39 | 39.5 | 10,500 |
| Rizal Comm. Banking Corp. | 18.75 | 18.75 | 17.25 | 18 | 112,100 |
| Security Bank Corp. | 57 | 57 | 55.5 | 55.5 | 69,500 |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 44.5 | 46 | 44.5 | 46 | 15,300 |
| OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS | | | | | |
| Bankard Inc. | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 250,000 |
| First Abacus Financial | 0.45 | 0.51 | 0.45 | 0.51 | 40,000 |
| Manulife Financial Corp. | 3400 | 3800 | 3400 | 3800 | 30 |
| PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 300,000 |
| Sun Life Financial Inc. | 2110 | 2120 | 2110 | 2120 | 580 |
| Ivantage Corp. | 1.24 | 1.24 | 1.16 | 1.2 | 4,786,000 |
| INDUSTRIAL | | | | | |
| ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER | | | | | |
| First Gen Corp. | 50 | 50 | 49 | 49.5 | 2,269,800 |
| First Phil Hldgs Corp. | 51 | 51 | 49 | 49.5 | 2,766,500 |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 14.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 14.25 | 83,100 |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 21.5 | 21.5 | 21.25 | 21.5 | 1,263,500 |
| Manila Water Co. Inc. | 7.6 | 7.6 | 7.2 | 7.3 | 4,434,000 |
| Petron Corp. | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.55 | 4.65 | 6,474,000 |
| East Asia Power Res. Corp. | 0.245 | 0.245 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 1,350,000 |
| Trans-Asia Oil and Energy | 1.06 | 1.06 | 1.04 | 1.06 | 720,000 |
| FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO | | | | | |
| Alaska Milk Corp. | 3.45 | 3.45 | 3.45 | 3.45 | 10,000 |
| Ginebra San Miguel Inc. | 24.25 | 24.75 | 24.25 | 24.75 | 127,800 |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 36.5 | 36.5 | 35 | 35 | 827,800 |
| Pancake House Inc. | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 30,000 |
| RFM Corp. | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 10,000 |
| Roxas Holdings Inc. | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.15 | 3.15 | 765,000 |
| Swift Food Inc. | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 100,000 |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 62 | 64 | 62 | 64 | 58,900 |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 82 | 82.5 | 81.5 | 82.5 | 260,400 |
| Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 2,000 |
| Universal Robina Corp. | 23 | 23 | 22.75 | 22.75 | 5,605,900 |
| Vitarich Corp. | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 900,000 |
| CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES | | | | | |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.35 | 0.37 | 0.35 | 0.36 | 2,560,000 |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 1.78 | 1.8 | 1.74 | 1.76 | 3,784,000 |
| Fortune Cement Corp. | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.78 | 1.8 | 375,000 |
| Holcim Philippines Inc. | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5 | 5 | 2,253,000 |
| Republic Cement Corp. | 1.74 | 1.74 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 58,000 |
| CHEMICALS | | | | | |
| Metro Alliance Hldgs B | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.35 | 0.35 | 110,000 |
| Mabuhay Vinyl Corp. | 0.72 | 0.72 | 0.72 | 0.72 | 100,000 |
| DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS | | | | | |
| Global Equities Inc. | 0.12 | 0.13 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 15,690,000 |
| Picop Resources Inc. | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.0775 | 0.0775 | 1,300,000 |
| HOLDING FIRMS | | | | | |
| Abacus Con Res & Hdg A | 0.008 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 0.008 | 5,000,000 |
| Ayala Corp. | 442.5 | 442.5 | 415 | 422.5 | 463,430 |
| Alsons Cons. Res. Inc. | 0.56 | 0.56 | 0.56 | 0.56 | 150,000 |
| Aboitiz Equity Ventures | 6.4 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 2,693,000 |
| Ajo Net Holdings Inc. | 0.025 | 0.026 | 0.025 | 0.026 | 18,100,000 |
| A. Soriano Corp. | 3.4 | 3.65 | 3.35 | 3.6 | 884,000 |
| APC Group Inc. | 0.28 | 0.3 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 9,280,000 |
| Alcorn Gold Res. Corp. | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.009 | 0.009 | 94,000,000 |
| Anglo Phil Holdings Corp. | 1.26 | 1.3 | 1.14 | 1.2 | 7,891,000 |
| ATN Holdings Inc. | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 20,000 |
| Baguio Gold Holdings Corp. | 1.4 | 1.58 | 1.4 | 1.56 | 219,000 |
| Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5,000 |
| Benpres Holdings Corp. | 1.22 | 1.24 | 1.18 | 1.22 | 5,000,000 |
| DMCI Holdings Inc. | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.55 | 4.6 | 672,000 |
| Filinvest Dev. Corp. | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.55 | 3.7 | 660,000 |
| F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp. | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 20,000 |
| House Of Investments Inc. | 1.64 | 1.64 | 1.52 | 1.52 | 250,000 |
| J.G. Summit Holdings Inc. | 8 | 8 | 7.8 | 7.9 | 949,000 |
| Keppel Holdings | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.75 | 60,000 |
| Medco Holdings | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 100,000 |
| Pacifica | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 300,000 |
| Prime Orion Phils. Inc. | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.215 | 0.22 | 3,550,000 |
| Prime Media Holdings Inc. | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 1.14 | 120,000 |
| Republic Glass Hldg. Corp. | 1.68 | 1.68 | 1.68 | 1.68 | 17,000 |
| Solid Group Inc. | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 10,000 |
| Sinophil Corp. | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.155 | 9,980,000 |
| SM Investments Corp. | 248 | 248 | 239 | 244 | 132,840 |
| South China Resources Inc. | 1.16 | 1.16 | 1.1 | 1.12 | 1,194,000 |
| Unioil Res. & Holdings Co | 0.065 | 0.065 | 0.065 | 0.065 | 4,800,000 |
| Wellex Industries Inc. | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 300,000 |
| Zeus Holdings Inc. | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 50,000 |
| PROPERTY | | | | | |
| Ayala Land Inc. | 14 | 14.25 | 13.5 | 13.75 | 12,974,200 |
| Araneta Properties Inc. | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 10,000 |
| Belle Corp. | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.26 | 1.26 | 5,503,000 |
| A Brown Company Inc. | 0.92 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 90,000 |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.31 | 4,990,000 |
| Cebu Holdings Inc. | 2.36 | 2.36 | 2.28 | 2.32 | 2,630,000 |
| C & P Homes Inc. | 1.76 | 1.84 | 1.76 | 1.84 | 25,000 |
| Cyber Bay Corp. | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.205 | 0.205 | 1,090,000 |
| EIB Realty Developers Inc. | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 60,000 |
| Empire East Land Inc. | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.66 | 0.67 | 18,970,000 |
| Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc. | 0.68 | 0.7 | 0.68 | 0.7 | 30,000 |
| Ever-Gotesco Resources | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 500,000 |
| Fairmont Holdings Inc. | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.64 | 0.67 | 370,000 |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.54 | 1.6 | 16,276,000 |
| Interport Res. | 0.0095 | 0.01 | 0.009 | 0.0095 | 166,000,000 |
| Interport Res. B | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.0095 | 0.0095 | 98,000,000 |
| Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc. | 0.72 | 0.73 | 0.72 | 0.73 | 160,000 |
| Fil-Estate Land Inc. | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 650,000 |
| Marsteel Cons. Inc. B | 0.018 | 0.018 | 0.018 | 0.018 | 2,000,000 |
| Megaworld Corp. | 1.74 | 1.74 | 1.68 | 1.7 | 34,441,000 |
| Metro Pacific Corp. | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 20,780,000 |
| MRC Allied Ind. Inc. | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.26 | 0.26 | 210,000 |
| Philippine Estates Corp. | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0.12 | 200,000 |
| Polar Property Holdings | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 100,000 |
| Robinsons Land Corp. | 12 | 12.5 | 12 | 12.25 | 1,729,500 |
| Phil Realty And Holdings | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 10,290,000 |
| SM Development Corp. | 1.74 | 1.74 | 1.74 | 1.74 | 95,000 |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 8.6 | 8.6 | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8,607,000 |
| Uniwide Holdings Inc. | 0.115 | 0.115 | 0.11 | 0.115 | 6,560,000 |
| MEDIA | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. | 17.25 | 17.25 | 16 | 16.5 | 160,000 |
| Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp. | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 6,000 |
| TELECOMMUNICATIONS | | | | | |
| Digital Telecom Phils Inc. | 1.26 | 1.36 | 1.24 | 1.3 | 26,720,000 |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 1020 | 1020 | 970 | 970 | 53,150 |
| Pilipino Tel. Corp. | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 14,667,000 |
| Phil. Long Dis Tel Co. | 2100 | 2100 | 2065 | 2070 | 171,770 |
| INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | | | | | |
| Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.235 | 0.245 | 0.235 | 0.245 | 8,510,000 |
| Ionics Inc. | 1.42 | 1.5 | 1.42 | 1.5 | 196,000 |
| Island Info and Tech Inc. | 0.044 | 0.044 | 0.044 | 0.044 | 1,100,000 |
| ISM Communications Corp. | 0.048 | 0.05 | 0.048 | 0.05 | 700,000 |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.027 | 0.028 | 0.026 | 0.027 | 95,100,000 |
| TRANSPORTATION SERVICES | | | | | |
| Asian Terminals Inc. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 170,000 |
| Int'l Container Term'l Sv | 13.75 | 14 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 4,227,900 |
| Keppel Phils. Marine Inc. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 60,000 |
| HOTEL & LEISURE | | | | | |
| Acesite Phils Hotel Corp. | 3.55 | 3.55 | 3.55 | 3.55 | 350,000 |
| Leisure & Resorts Corp. | 1.66 | 1.66 | 1.6 | 1.62 | 1,528,000 |
| Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc. | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 200,000 |
| Waterfront Phils. Inc. | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.58 | 0.58 | 2,120,000 |
| EDUCATION | | | | | |
| IPeople Inc. | 3.25 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 177,000 |
| DIVERSIFIED SERVICES | | | | | |
| Macroasia Corp. | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.55 | 2.7 | 1,472,000 |
| Paxys Inc. | 12.25 | 12.5 | 12.25 | 12.5 | 935,300 |
| MINING | | | | | |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. A | 6.2 | 6.2 | 5.7 | 6.1 | 21,656,000 |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. B | 6.3 | 6.4 | 5.9 | 6.4 | 6,898,000 |
| Abra Mining & Industrial | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.0095 | 0.0095 | 300,000,000 |
| Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't | 9.8 | 9.8 | 8.8 | 9.2 | 13,803,000 |
| Benguet Corp. A | 14.5 | 14.75 | 13.5 | 14 | 206,600 |
| Dizon Copper Silver Mines | 2.5 | 2.55 | 2.4 | 2.46 | 673,000 |
| Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A | 0.42 | 0.42 | 0.39 | 0.41 | 42,930,000 |
| Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.43 | 0.44 | 27,680,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. A | 0.026 | 0.028 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 411,400,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. B | 0.029 | 0.029 | 0.028 | 0.028 | 46,100,000 |
| Omico Corp. | 0.0075 | 0.008 | 0.0075 | 0.0075 | 488,000,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. A | 5.5 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 5.3 | 19,296,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. B | 5.4 | 5.5 | 4.95 | 5.5 | 20,353,000 |
| Semirara Mining Corp. | 32 | 32 | 29.5 | 30 | 361,100 |
| Vulcan Ind'l | 0.8 | 0.83 | 0.76 | 0.8 | 5,010,000 |
| OIL | | | | | |
| Basic Consolidated Inc. | 0.31 | 0.31 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 2,050,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. A | 0.012 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.012 | 635,500,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. B | 0.012 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.013 | 75,100,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. A | 1.72 | 1.74 | 1.56 | 1.62 | 7,548,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. B | 1.76 | 1.76 | 1.6 | 1.62 | 2,178,000 |
| Petroenergy Res. Corp. | 16.5 | 17.5 | 16 | 17.5 | 2,042,200 |
| PREFERRED | | | | | |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series P | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 1,800 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 900 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series V | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 2,000 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series W | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 2,500 |
| PLDT 10% Pref Series AA | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 1,600 |
| WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC. | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR) | 17 | 17 | 16.75 | 17 | 836,900 |

## CURRENCIES

| May 15, 2006<br>Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.773754 | 1.000000 | 51.7120 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.007030 | 0.009085 | 0.4698 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.465877 | 1.894500 | 97.9684 |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 0.099800 | 0.128982 | 6.6699 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.645872 | 0.834725 | 43.1653 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.697704 | 0.901713 | 46.6294 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.493970 | 0.638407 | 33.0133 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.597632 | 0.772380 | 39.9413 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 2.053979 | 2.654562 | 137.2727 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.206455 | 0.266823 | 13.7980 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.492398 | 0.636375 | 32.9082 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000088 | 0.000114 | 0.0059 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.020432 | 0.026406 | 1.3655 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.210689 | 0.272294 | 14.0809 |
| Euro | Euro | 1.000000 | 1.292400 | 66.8326 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.254608 | 0.329056 | 17.0161 |
| Brazil | Real | 0.361551 | 0.467268 | 24.1634 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134155 | 0.173382 | 8.9659 |
| India | Rupee | 0.017237 | 0.022277 | 1.1520 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.216133 | 0.279330 | 14.4447 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.069708 | 0.090090 | 4.6587 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.485539 | 0.627510 | 32.4498 |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.123781 | 0.159974 | 8.2726 |
| Korea | Won | 0.000829 | 0.001072 | 0.0554 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.024653 | 0.031862 | 1.6476 |

# UCPB unit lends ₱2.2B to small coconut farmers

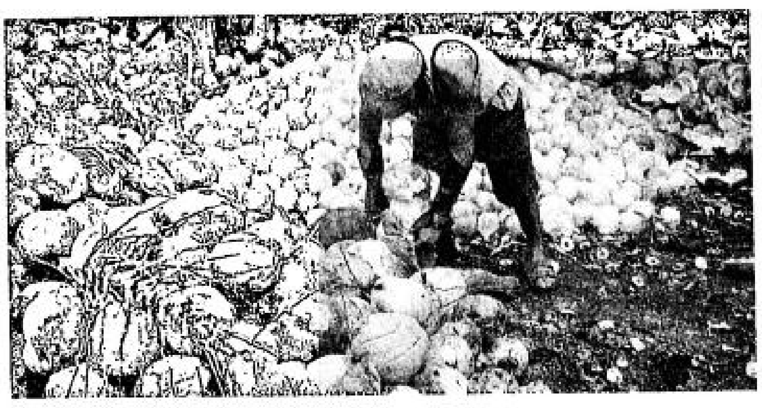
## Loans benefiting close to 240,000 rural households

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

UCPB-CIIF FINANCE AND DEVElopment Corp., the finance arm of United Coconut Planters Bank, has lent more than P2 billion to small coconut farmers as of March, benefiting 238,990 rural households.

CIIF Finance said in a statament yesterday that for the first quarter of this year alone, it released P94.89 million in new loans to small coconut farmers, bringing the total loans it has provided to the sector to P2.2 billion.

CIIF Finance president Edgardo Amistad said the new loans financed the on-farm and off-farm livelihood activities of 11,161 more small coconut farmers, raising the number of households assisted by the company's credit programs.



COCO farmers are good payers

CIIF Finance was organized by UCPB in 1994 as a specialized unit to focus and speed up delivery of credit, in a bid to create additional income opportunities in coconut-producing communities.

The company said it was implementing six credit programs in 62 of the country's 64 coconut-producing provinces, including a Grameen-type microfinance lending program for the wives and daughters of small coconut farmers.

The program was launched in 2001 and now accounts for 16 percent of total loans granted so far.

The credit experience has been very good with 93 percent of outstanding loans in "current" or healthy paying status, Amistad said.

This means that the small coconut farmers were generating sufficient additional income from their livelihood activities to repay their loans.

Amistad explained that the key to the credit programs' success had been the continuing activities being carried out by CIIF Finance to strengthen the organizational, technical, financial and marketing management capabilities of the beneficiaries.

CIIF Finance has conducted a total of 851 training activities for 18,235 members and officers of coconut farmer cooperatives, including courses in basic management, project development and management, financial analysis, credit and financial management, and various technology transfer modules such as, copra trading, cattle breeding and fattening, and swine, crab and coffee production.

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# Mining seen generating 30,000 new jobs in Caraga, DTI says

BUTUAN CITY—AN ESTIMATED 30,000 TO 50,000 more people will be employed in Caraga this year because of the entry of three mining firms here, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

DTI director Brielgo Pagaran said one of the mining firms scheduled to start its mining operations this year was the Chinese-owned Jinchuan Baosteel, which takes over the Philnico mines in Nonoc Island, Surigao City.

Philnico owns the Surigao Nickel Plant, which suspended operations in 1986 due to economic reasons.

"The potential for employment in these mining activities is between 30,000 to 50,000," Pagaran told the INQUIRER.

He said that with a combined investment of $3 billion, the operation of the new mines would also uplift the condition of the region.

Caraga is rich in gold, chromite, nickel, limestone, manganese, silver, iron, and marble.

But despite being one of the country's mineral-rich areas, Caraga remains among the poorest regions.

Pagaran said he believed that the mining industry would eventually help alleviate poverty in the region.

"Mining is a boon to our region in terms of employment and livelihood," he said.

The environmental research group Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (Afrim), however, believes otherwise.

Afrim said prospects were high that more people would be displaced by the mining operations, which would negate the benefit of the mines' generating more jobs.

"More people, especially from the tribal minorities in Caraga, would be driven out of their lands," Afrim executive director Victor Parra said.

Parra said some 116 firms have so far applied for mining concessions in the region, covering 339,324.41 hectares of land.

Most of the areas are inhabited by indigenous peoples, he said. *Franklin A. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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## Philippine National Bank

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 30, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 24, 2005
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2005
5. Approval of the 2005 Annual Report
6. Approval of the Amendment to the Amended By-Laws (transfer of the position, powers and duties of the Chairman of the Board in Sections 6.1 and 6.3, Article VI captioned "Officers" to Section 5.4, Article V captioned "Board of Directors")
7. Ratification of All Acts, Resolutions and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
8. Election of Directors
9. Appointment of External Auditor
10. Other Matters
11. Adjournment

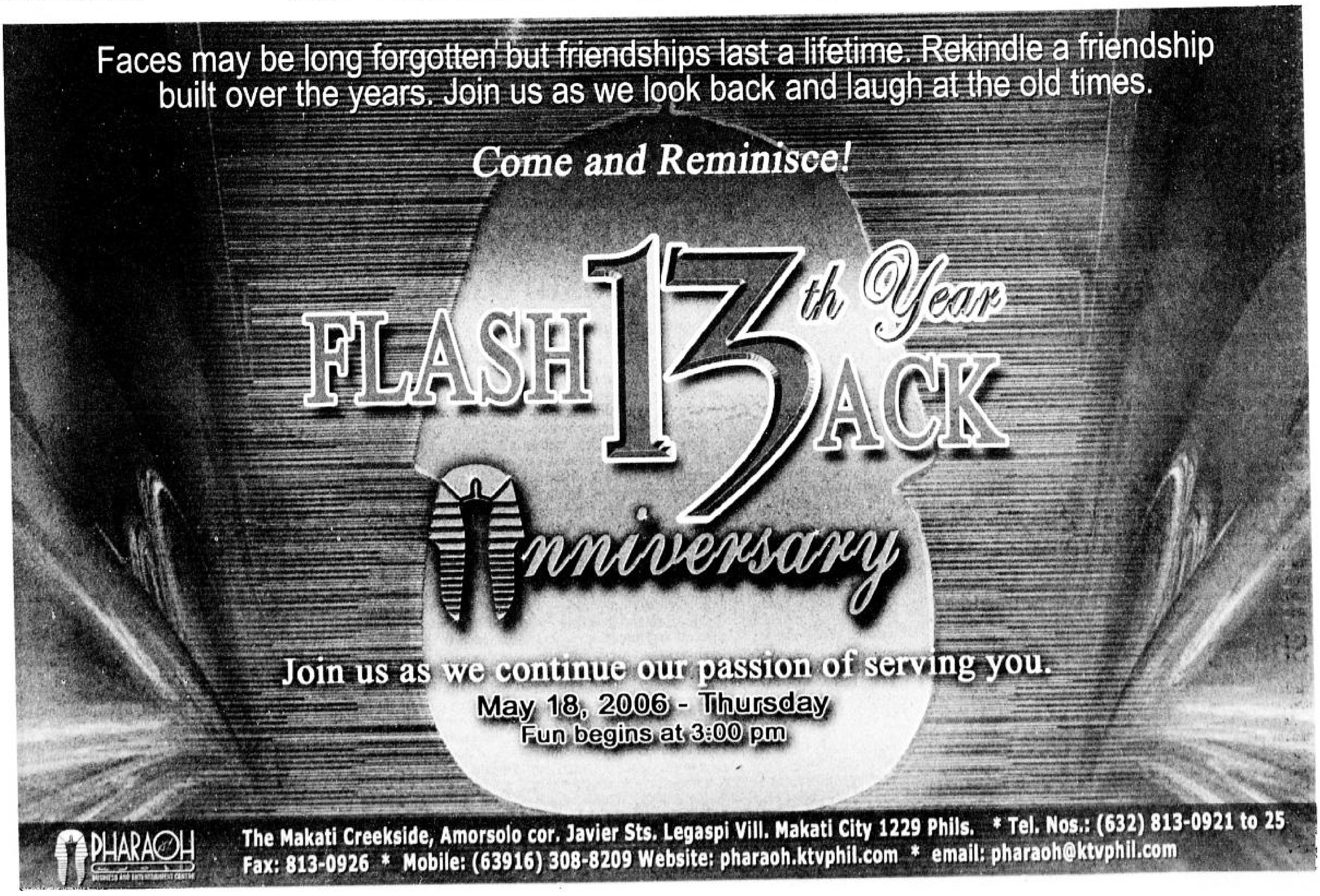
Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 25, 2005 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of May 2, 2006 will be entitled to notice and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 6:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 25, 2006. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 26, 2006, 9:30 a.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 24, 2006

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary



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# Balance-of-payments surplus seen at $2.35B

## Boosted by higher OFW remittances, bonds sale

**By Doris C. Dumlao**

THE PHILIPPINES LIKELY SUSTAINED balance-of-payments surpluses of about $283 million in March and $43 million in April on strong foreign exchange inflows, preliminary data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

The surplus in March brought the first quarter BOP surplus to $2.3 billion, or more than three times the $782 million surplus registered in the same period last year.

The BOP surplus further rose to about $2.35 billion in April, much higher than the $887 million posted in the four-month period last year.

The estimates were based on the change in net international reserves and had yet to include revaluation adjustments.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account, and the capital and financial account.

Any transaction that gives rise to a foreign exchange payment by a Philippine resident, such as importation or debt servicing, is a deficit item in the BOP while any transaction that gives rise to receipt of foreign exchange—such as borrowings, exportation and inward remittances—is a surplus item.

Since the start of the year, the country's BOP has been supported by the national government's increased foreign exchange deposits in the BSP (raised through bond sales or loans), the BSP's own foreign exchange operations, inflows from foreign private investments and overseas Filipino workers' remittances.

In the meantime, the country's foreign exchange reserves also surged to a new high of $20.91 billion in April.

The BSP has taken advantage of the strong inflows to beef up its gross international reserves by buying dollars from the spot foreign exchange market.

The GIR—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund and foreign investments—is an indication of the country's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy mainly for importation and debt servicing.

For March and early April, the BSP was seen as a net buyer of dollars at the Philippine Dealing System.

In the first week of April alone, the BSP's net dollar purchases amounted to nearly $200 million. For March, its net buying position amounted to about $428 million.

The latest BSP statistics showed that OFW inflows coursed through the banking system surged to an eight-year high of $1.03 billion in March. .This was 15.6 percent better than the inflows a year ago. The double-digit growth brought the total OFW remittances in the first quarter to $2.8 billion or 14.6 percent higher than the level posted last year.

Inflows from OFWs are seasonally stronger in April and May in time for the opening classes.

## Business clash

**BREAKTIME**

*Conrado R. Banal III*

THEY SAY IN BUSINESS THESE DAYS YOU must take in partners, or else ...

Well, they say that without partners, your chances of survival in this global age get lower than Gloriaetta's height in high heels.

For their partner in Equitable PCI Bank, the SSS and the GSIS—the pension funds of millions of lowly Filipino workers—have the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy.

Together the SSS and the GSIS owned more than 40 percent of the bank from the start, while the SM group bought the 24 percent holdings of the Go family only last year.

Without much ado, Henry Sy's favorite child Tessie Sy-Coson, former chair of Banco de Oro, took control of EPCIB.

Since when did 24 percent become bigger than 40 percent, and the SM group could control the bank?

But the thing is that the SSS and the GSIS, even with their combined 40 percent ownership, allowed the SM group's people in BDO practically to take charge of EPCIB.

That should give BDO, plus the entire SM group of course, complete access to the trade secrets of EPCIB. You know—things like its business with big clients!

Really, why did the SSS and the GSIS step aside for the SM group, when it was clear that the SM group's business interest clashed with EPCIB's?

Don't tell me it's because the government is in command of the pension funds, and the SM group, in turn, is in command of the government.

* * *

During the time of the Go family in EPCIB, before they sold out to the Sy family, the Mercury chain of drugstores was one of the biggest accounts of EPCIB.

From what I hear, the country's biggest retail business—even bigger than the retail portion of the SM group—left EPCIB. Or at least Mercury moved the bulk of its banking business elsewhere.

The biggest problem of EPCIB, you see, is precisely the conflict of interest from the SM group (24 percent ownership)—the very same partner of the SSS and the GSIS (40 percent ownership).

The same conflict of interest messes up our (SSS and GSIS members) investment in EPCIB. That's why in the stock market, they are saying that the bank is not earning as much as it can.

Say what you will about the Go family—how they outfoxed the SSS and the GSIS in the buyout of the old PCI Bank—but, at least, it had only banking for its main business.

Even in Binondo, the old Equitable Bank thrived on the personal relationship of its founder Go Pai Lan with the moneyed clients.

But now with the SM group having a finger in every sensitive operation of EPCIB, nobody can blame its big clients if they start worrying about the conflict of interest.

Look—the SM group competes directly with EPCIB customers. The same customers may think that since the SM group controls EPCIB, it is not hard for somebody in the SM group's other businesses to get information on what the competitor is doing

Import LCs, for instance—they are one way of knowing the inventory of the other guy!

In the case of Mercury Drug, it competes with this new drugstore chain called Watson's—possibly a worthy challenger to the dominance of Mercury in the drug retail business.

One of the major stockholders of Watson's is the SM group.

* * *

Sure, having a business partner in this country, preferably a big-time foreign company, can open the door to a lot of opportunities.

But talk in business lately, particularly among foreign banks here, has it that certain multinationals are already being pushy with their local partners. Hmm. Maybe they think that this country is still their countries' colony.

That the foreign partners are looking after their interests in the local ventures, is quite understandable.

But when their meddling is already derailing millions—or even billions—of pesos worth of deals, their "good intentions" can easily turn into something that the road to hell is being paved with.

Still, many other foreign firms give their local partners a lot of rope. For one, who but the locals know the ins and outs of doing business here?

First Pacific of Hong Kong, for instance, which is owned by Indonesia's Salim family, allowed its people here to make the hard decisions, even when they were already running the conglomerate to the ground some years ago.

Well, those guys are now delivering to First Pacific huge bonanzas through PLDT. Okay, it is mainly Smart Telecom! But Smart is part of PLDT.

Anyway, Kirin Beer of Japan does not tell its local partner San Miguel how to brew its beer, and Singapore Telecom does not tell Globe how to sell prepaid cards for text jokes.

Philamlife also has a US-based partner, known as the AIG, which, according to reports, allowed the local insurance firm to expand its portfolio.

Look, even at the turn of the 20th century, when the United States was starting to use its military might to colonize this country, the US military used local scouts.

And some desk hounds in some multinationals now think that they know better because they are an ocean away. Hello!

# Changes in Alabang viaduct project design proposed

**By Daxim L. Lucas**

**REDESIGN** aimed at ensuring road safety

THE P8-BILLION REHABILITATION OF South Luzon Expressway is facing delay as a government consultant proposed changes in the design of the reconstructed Alabang viaduct.

In a press conference, South Luzon Tollway Corp. president Mark Dumol said the government consultant—French engineering company BCEOM—had proposed significant changes in the design of the viaduct.

"They want us to strengthen the foundations and [to use] stronger grade steel," he said.

Dumol said SLTC and its contractor, Katahira & Engineers International have no choice but to comply with the redesign as proposed by the French consultant, which reports to the Toll Regulatory Board.

SLTC will shoulder the additional cost of the redesign if it would mean ensuring the safety of motorists, he added.

So far, the company's target to start the rehabilitation work on the Alabang viaduct by June or July still stands, although Dumol could not completely rule out further delays.

He added that other segments of the project were also facing delays, especially in securing the land needed for the final phase of the highway between Calamba, Laguna and Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

Dumol said the government had succeeded in securing only 17 percent of the land required for the project as opposed to the 40 percent or 50 percent that should already be covered at this time.

"We've been promised this for a long time now," he said, adding that he was not expecting trouble down the road as the area only had about 100 informal settlers, while the rest is mostly idle land held by private landowners.

SLTC is a joint venture between Philippine National Construction Corp. and Malaysian toll road operator MTD Capital Bhd. Its project involves the rehabilitation of the Marcos-era Alabang viaduct, the widening of SLEx from Alabang to Calamba, and its extension to the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road.

Once completed by the end of 2008, the highway will cut travel time from Alabang to Sto. Tomas, Batangas to 30 minutes from about an hour at present.

Dumol said the project would also double the vehicle capacity of SLEx from an average of 100,000 vehicles per day to 200,000 vehicles, which would be reached in 2013, at the earliest.

At present, a maximum of 150,000 vehicles use SLEx daily.

The SLTC chief added that the International Finance Corp.—the private equity arm of the World Bank—was expected to seal a $50-million financing deal for the project next month.

The balance of the funding requirement, amounting to $80 million to $100 million, will likely be funded by a syndicate of local banks.

Dumol is hoping that this funding component will be peso-denominated to protect the company from foreign currency risk that any peso devaluation may bring.

# Semirara Q1 profit hits ₱270M

COAL PRODUCER SEMIRARA MINING CORP. said its net income after payment of taxes dropped to P270.2 million in the first quarter from P339 million in the same quarter in 2005 as its provision for taxes increased.

First quarter revenue hit P1.38 billion, consisting of P1.36 billion in coal sales and coal handling revenue of P28.51 million. Cost of sales was recorded at P958.68 million.

Provision for income tax in the first quarter amounted to P108.06 million , 13.6 times of last year's tax provision of P7.95 million.

Total material excavation hit 11.5 million bank cubic meters (bcm) during the first quarter, up by 75 percent from year-ago's 6.58 million bcm. Run-of-mine (ROM) coal production increased from last year's 584,436 metric tons (MTs) to 625,165 MTs.

Total coal sold during the period reached 600,026 MTs. Sales to National Power Corp. accounted for 50.7 percent or 304,730 MTs. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

# RFM posts ₱20M in net income

FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRM RFM CORP. REported a net income of P20 million for the first quarter of 2006, a five-fold increase from the P4 million posted in the same period last year.

In a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, RFM said good operating fundamentals and judicious spending helped the company sustain its recovery.

RFM's net sales increased by 2.4 percent in the first quarter to P1.44 billion from P1.40 billion in 2005.

Operating income during the quarter reached P71 million, up 45 percent from P49 million last year.

The continuing positive trend in the RFM group was attributed to the strong performance of its flour, ice cream and baked goods businesses, while other segments focused on lowering their cost structures and improving their margins.

# *Business groups seek law on perks for Clark locators*

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**

THE JOINT FOREIGN CHAMBERS OF COMmerce in the Philippines yesterday expressed impatience over the delays in the approval of measures that grant incentives to locators in Clark Special Economic Zone.

The JFCCP, which groups seven foreign business groups, said in a statement that it was now almost a year since the Supreme Court declared void the perks that investors in Clark were enjoying. These, it said, were the incentives offered to investors by the government in the course of converting the former military base into an investment haven.

JFCCP members include the American, Australia-New Zealand, Canadian, European, Japanese and Korean chambers of commerce and the Philippine Association of Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters.

The group represents about 1,700 multinational companies that have substantial investments in the Philippines.

Business groups have been clamoring for a new law that specifically grants Clark locators fiscal and non-fiscal incentives.

"How long does it take to correct a legislative mistake?," the JFCCP said. "Should foreign investors close shop and leave the Philippines before a corrective legislation is passed?"

It said that as the waiting got longer, business risks to existing investors "would become real and could lead to business closures, loss of jobs and a very negative impact on the country's investment image."

"There is much talk these days about amending the Constitution to liberalize restrictions on foreign investments," JFCCP said. "While this is an important reform, we urge urgent attention to the concerns of existing investors, such as those who currently employ thousands in Filipinos at Clark."

JFCCP called on the House of Representatives to pass House Bills No. 4900 and No. 4901 as soon as it resumed session.

Also, the group urged the Senate to do the same soon after so that a measure could be finalized before the next recess begins on June 10.

HB 4900 grants tax amnesty to existing investor-locators at the Clark, John Hay, Morong and Poro Point SEZs, which are potentially harmed by the Supreme Court rulings.

HB No. 4901 amends the Bases Conversion Development Act of 1992 "to rectify the legislative oversight" by providing the same tax incentives that Subic locators enjoy to business establishments at the (four) special economic zones.

# Mining firm fears foreclosure of assets

LAFAYETTE (PHILIPPINES) INC. yesterday confirmed reports that its assets might be foreclosed by creditors and that this might happen soon because of its failure to resume the operations of its Rapu-Rapu mining project in Albay.

"Foreclosure by the creditor banks of Lafayette is a possibility in the near term as a result of the delay in the project's restart which was originally slated for mid-March," the company said in a statement.

Operations at the Rapu- Rapu mining site was stopped last October after cyanide spills from its gold, copper and zinc mines polluted a nearby river.

One incident involved mechanical and human error and a second was caused by heavy rains, reports said.

"The project is losing P150 million or $3 million a month in the past six months in terms of maintenance (costs)," LPI said.

"The banks and the investors are worried about the uncertainty of a restart even after the company had declared it had already fully complied with all the government's requirements and conditions," the firm added.

Last month, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said it was planning to come up with a guidebook that would spell out what were required and expected of firms, local governments and communities with regard to mining activities.

CMP president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez said the group would seek the help of the Bishops Businessmen's Conference to bridge the gap between the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the industry, and to solicit cooperation from all sectors that have stakes in the industry.

Romualdez said CMP realized that the CBCP's negative comments about the industry was in reaction to the Rapu-Rapu problem and that efforts would be made to prevent similar incidents.

He said the group was calling for stakeholders in the industry to work together on the proposed guidebook.

He added that the guidebook would make clear what parties are expected to do to help remove suspicion that mining firms bribe their way around and hoodwink local communities. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

# Megaworld posts 41% rise in profit

MEGAWORLD CORP. YESTERDAY SAID ITS consolidated net income in the first quarter rose 41 percent to P605.2 million , from P430.7 million in the same period last year.

Consolidated revenue—real estate sales, rental income, hotel income, interest income and others—grew to P1 billion from P814 million in the same period last year.

In a report filed with the Securities and exchange Commission, Megaworld said P1.2 billion in revenue came from the sale of residential lots, condominium and office units in 2006 , a 32 percent increase from P912.6 million in the previous year.

Rental income for the period amounted to P167.37 million, up 21 percent from P137.94 million in the same period last year. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

# NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION OF P-FOUR, INC.

Notice is hereby given that **P-FOUR, INC.** will file with the Securities and Exchange Commission a Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation shortening its corporate life to April 30, 2005.

Any person who may have a claim against said corporation may present the same to the undersigned at c/o. ALPAP 1 Bldg., 5th Floor, 140 LP. Leviste Street, Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City.

This announcement serves as notice to all parties concerned of the dissolution of said Company.

(Sgd.) **ALELI MILITSALA-BONIOL**
Corporate Secretary
P-FOUR, INC.

(PDI-May 16, 2006)

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**PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5291

## INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

**5kV and 15kV Medium Voltage Switchgears under FGJ 50986**
**Approved Budget - PHP 2,525,000.00**

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Harold T. Fontillas** starting May 9, 2006, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P300.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **May 17, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) of May 24, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

**Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee II**

(PDI-May 9 & 16, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila

## INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF VARIOUS SERVICE VEHICLES

The Securities and Exchange Commission, through its Disposal Committee invites qualified bidders/buyers to bid for VARIOUS OLD/USED SERVICE VEHICLES on a "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis, as follows:

| ITEM No. | DESCRIPTION | QTY UNIT | MINIMUM BID PRICE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 1997 Honda Civic, Model 1.6 Liter Vti-V-TEC, 4 Door with plate no. SEK-535 | 1 | P 201,000.00 |
| 2. | 1994 Toyota Corolla XE 1.3 liters, Dark Bluish Gray with plate no. SEA-440 | 1 | P 121,000.00 |
| 3. | 1994 Toyota Corolla XE 1.3 liters, Silver with plate no. SEA-401 | 1 | P 121,000.00 |
| 4. | 1993 Toyota Tamaraw FX 1.5, 4Cylinder, White with plate no. SEA-470 | 1 | P 70,714.29 |
| 5. | 1993 Toyota Tamaraw FX 1.5, 4Cylinder, Blue with plate no. SEA-461 | 1 | P 84,385.71 |

The said vehicles may be inspected during office hours, Monday to Friday at the SEC Parking Lot behind the SEC Building, Florida Street, Greenhills East Subdivision, San Juan City.

Bidding documents may be obtained at the General Services Division, Human Resource and Administrative Department, 4th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon payment of a non-refundabe fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) starting May 8 to 19, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For further details, please contact Assistant Director Romeo O. Dauag at Tel. No. 727-3320.

Pre-Bid Conference will be on May 19, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at the CRMD Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SEC Building.

Deadline for submission of bids shall be on May 24, 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the General Services Division, 4th Floor, SEC Bldg. and immediately thereafter bids will be opened at the CRMD Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SEC Building.

The Securities and Exchange Commission reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formalities therein and to award the Sale to a bidder whose proposal as evaluated is most advantageous to the Commission.

The SEC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnity any bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bids, nor does it guarantee that any award will be made at all.

May 5, 2006.

(Sgd.) **BENITO A. CATARAN**
Chairman
Disposal Committee

(PDI-May 9 & 16, 2006)

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## RP hosts Asia-Europe meeting's conference of labor ministries

TOP LABOR OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES from Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) member countries convene on recently for a two-day conference in Manila. Labor and Employment Acting Secretary Manuel G. Imson will deliver the keynote address during the event on the theme, "Substantiating the ASEM Dialogue on Social and Employment Issues." Participating in the May 11-12, conference at the Discovery Suites in Pasig City are the Labor Ministries of Asia-Pacific countries including the ASEAN-10 (the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam); as well as China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and European representatives. Imson said that the two day event, led by the Philippines' Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in partnership with the prominent German foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), are pivotal to the efforts to address social and labor issues under the ASEM fold. The two-day Manila ASEM conference shall revolve on sessions addressing the following issues: 1) How can the Nation States Deal with Globalization?; 2) The Decent Work Agenda - Putting Principles into Practice; 3) Combining Economic Growth with Job Creation - Innovative Approaches; 4) The Labor Force - between Qualification and (lack of) Security; 5) Industrial Relations and Dispute Settlement; and 6) Labor Mobility and Migration.

# OBITUARIES

*"Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit"*

**ROSARIO "CHERRY" A. CASAL**
joined her creator on May 14, 2006 at the age of 66

"My heartfelt thanks to friends, family and most of all to God's precious gifts, my children: Maricar, MayAnn & Ron, Michael & Grace, Mark Danny & Camille, and Mia; grandchildren: Angelica, Cayla, Gabby and Hipolita."

Her remains lie in state at the White Plains Chapel, Nathan St., White Plains Subdivision, Quezon City.

Interment mass will be on May 18, Thursday at White Plains Chapel, 9 A.M.

She will be laid to rest at Christ the King Crypt, Greenmeadows.

In lieu of flowers, we would appreciate love offerings for the Casal charity projects.

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**LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.**
*Tel. Nos. Quezon City : 712-3001 • 743-6502*
*Manila : 711-6931 to 35*

| NAME OF DECEASED | PLACE OF VIEWING | INTERMENT/CREMATION | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | DATE & TIME | PLACE |
| LOURDES L. MANALO | Hearts of Mary & Jesus Parish, West Triangle, Q.C. | 05/17/06; after the 1:00 p.m. Mass | Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City |
| FELIXBERTO SISON | Chapel B-5, Q.C. | 05/17/06; after the 8:00 a.m. Mass | Holy Cross Memorial Park, Quezon City |

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*In Loving Memory*
**On the 2nd Death Anniversary of**

## ENRIQUE ZOBEL

**1927 – 2004**

Masses will be offered tomorrow, 17th of May 2006
at the following Churches:

**St. Alfonsus de Liguori Chapel** ................ 7:00 AM
*Magallanes Village, Makati City*

**San Ildefonso Parish** ................ 6:00 AM
*Pio del Pilar, Makati City*

**Sto. Domingo de Silos Parish** ................ 5:30 PM
*Calatagan, Batangas*

**Sanctuario de Antonio Parish** ................ 7:30 AM
*Forbes Park, Makati City*

**St. John Bosco Parish** ................ 6:30 PM
*Pasay Road, Makati City*

**St. James, the Great Parish** ................ 6:30 AM
*Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City*

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"Our true home is Heaven and
Jesus Christ whose return we long for
will come to save us." **Php 3:20**

## OLIMPIO ESTRADA POSADAS

**of Urbiztondo, Pangasinan / Quezon City**

*Peacefully joined our Creator*
*on May 11, 2006 at the age of 90.*

His loving wife **Librada (†)**; children and children-in-law, **Ben** and **Ching**; **Teddy (†) & Estela**; **Rene & Diane**; **Hector & Baby**; **Oscar (†) & Mel**; **Junior & Dolor**; grandchildren **JC, Bobby, Michie, Donna, Ronald, Oly, MJ, Gerald, Tyrone, Ryan, Eric, Christian, Hazel, Christine, Junelle & Olidol**; great grandchildren **Oliboy, Oele Jim, Hasmin, Habi, Chiara**; brothers **Faustino (†), Gregorio (†), Isidoro**; sisters **Margarita (†), Felisa, Soledad (†)**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be today, May 16, 2006
at the Loyola Memorial Park,
Marikina City after the
8:00 a.m. Mass.

# People, Events & Products

**SIDE A IN SIDE AID PRESS CONFERENCE**

Multi-awarded Side A band attended the press conference of the Side AID benefit concert held recently at Melo's Restaurant in Quezon City. All ticket proceeds will go to the Philippine American Group of Educators and Surgeons' (Pages Foundation) Operation Hope. Side AID is scheduled on May 20, 8 p.m. at the Aliw Theater. On the concert eve, Side A band will be joined by very special guest performers Basil Valdez, Agot Isidro and Rachelle Ann Go. Side AID tickets are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets. For ticket inquiries and reservations, contact Ticketnet at 911-5555 or visit www.ticketnet.com.ph.

## Product FILES

### Ice cream for the figure conscious

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## Bits & Clips

### Post Baccalaureate Diploma Program

THE PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ADvertisers Foundation (Panaf), in partnership with the De La Salle - College of St. Benilde (DLS-CSB) is offering a 6-module Post Baccalaureate Diploma Program in Marketing Communications Management. The program aims to develop and train students' analytical and creative planning skills through the integration of the Decision Support System. This May, the program will start its fifth module entitled: "The Dynamics of Below-the-Line Marketing and Marketing Services". The module which will run for 6 week-ends from May 27 to July 8, is designed to provide outstanding learning by combining actual case study examples for discussion purposes, the latest techniques and practical tools, and methods to promote immediate application back on the job. The sessions will cover the following subjects: Events Marketing and Management; eCommerce and Web Marketing; Sports Marketing; Music Marketing, and Direct Response Marketing. There will also be a special session on Marketing the Non-Profit Organization. Agapito "Jun" Alcantara Jr currently the vice president for marketing of Asia Brewery Inc will be the course facilitator. For reservations and inquiries, interested parties may visit or call: School of Professional and Continuing Education (Space) room 701, 7th floor, DLS-CSB Angelo King Int'l Center, Arellano corner Estrada Streets, Manila. Tel. nos. 523-8888 loc. 341-342; e-mail space@dls-csb.edu.ph.

### Jollibee's action-filled summer

FOR CHILDREN, SUMMER IS ALL ABOUT HAVING FUN. WHAT BETTER way to make this an action-packed summer than with the new Jollibee Kids Meal featuring Shaman King Fighting Spirits and Totally Spies Chic Art Set. Anime-fanatic boys can make their anime dreams come true with the Shaman King Fighting Spirits action figures. They can collect all three characters: Yoh Asakura, Trey Racer and Len Tao. For the girls, it's all about flexing their fashion sense and creativity with the Totally Spies Chic Art Set. Now they can bring the Totally Spies adventure home with Clover's Crayon Organizer, Sam's Lipstick Stamper and Alex's Sticker Blower. So hurry, visit the nearest Jollibee outlet, enjoy Jollibee Kids Meal and get into the action.

### Only CS authorized to distribute Top Gel

PAPAYA SOAP MANUFACTURER LING NA LAU HAS ACCEPTED A SETTLEment offer with two other companies, ending a year-long tussle over the trademark "Top Gel T.G. & Device of a Leaf." Both MCA Manufacturing and South Ocean Chinese Drug Store manufactured and packaged papaya whitening soaps similar to Top Gel products. The Intellectual Property Office barred the two companies from using the Top Gel trademark after Ling filed in February 2005 a case against owners Benjamin Yu and Heidi Cua. The IPO also denied the two companies' motion for reconsideration. Yu and Cua offered to settle the case. Genuine Top Gel products are in a laser-printed box, Ling said. She offered a P100,000 reward for every report of imitation that leads to a successful raid. Only CS trading is authorized to distribute Top Gel products.

# DOF studies flat income tax rate proposal

## Senate committee pushing for uniform 30% tax on income

**By Michelle V. Remo**

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE SAID IT would consider supporting the Senate proposal to impose a flat tax on the income of salaried workers.

A ranking DOF official said applying a single income tax rate to all individuals would make taxation simple, therefore making tax collection more efficient.

The proposal to impose a flat tax came from the Senate committee on ways and means, headed by Sen. Ralph Recto who is pushing for a uniform 30-percent income tax on individuals.

The finance official said Recto asked the DOF for comments on the proposal, which is likely to be formalized into a bill.

Recto's proposed bill likewise calls for a uniform amount of allowable deductions from one's taxable income, which he set at P100,000.

This means that salaried workers with an income of P100,000 and below are exempted from the income tax.

Income in excess of the threshold will be subject to the 30-percent income tax.

"We are in favor of reform, and so we find the proposal worth supporting," the finance official said.

He said a single tax rate would partly address the problem of under-declaration of income by taxpayers who want their tax liabilities reduced.

But while the DOF is amenable to a flat tax, the official said, the agency does not want it implemented immediately.

The government has to first improve its fiscal condition, by wiping out its budget deficit for instance, to be able to afford the amount of foregone revenues resulting from the proposal.

Government estimates showed that Recto's proposal would result in over P9 billion in foregone tax collections.

Recto's proposal would result in a net revenue loss for the government because whatever will be gained from raising the tax rate applied on middle-income earners will be gobbled up by losses from cutting the tax rate slapped on high-income earners.

Currently, individual income tax ranges from 5 to 32 percent.

Middle-income earners belong to an income tax bracket of less than 30 percent, while high-income earners are slapped the highest rate of 32 percent.

The estimated revenue losses will also come from the P100,000 proposed standard amount of allowable deduction, the DOF said.

The National Tax Research Center, an attached of the DOF that studies tax-related issues, said the government should exercise caution in implementing a uniform income tax rate, which deviates from the principle of progressiveness in taxation.

Under the principle, higher income earners should be imposed a higher income tax rate.

NTRC said middle-income earners might raise complaint on inequity. "The scenario may create political unrest considering the current economic situation in the country," the NTRC said in its analysis of Recto's proposal.

## *ERC prepares perks for efficient utilities*

**By Abigail L. Ho**

THE ENERGY REGULATORY Commission is formulating a set of incentives to reward distribution utilities that will cut their system losses.

ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said in a briefing yesterday that the proposed incentives were in line with the regulatory body's efforts to bring down electricity rates.

Albano said that since system losses were passed on to consumers, cutting it down would ultimately lead to less charges for end-users to shoulder.

System losses refer to electricity lost due to nontechnical causes, such as pilferage, or technical causes, such as inefficient distribution lines.

It will also benefit the power distributors themselves as system losses beyond certain caps—9.5 percent for distribution utilities and 14 percent for electric cooperatives—could no longer be passed on to customers.

ERC commissioner Jesus Alcordo noted that according to World Bank data, the combined transmission and distribution losses of Philippine power distributors averaged 14 percent, 10 percentage points higher than the losses in Korea.

Assuming that the Philippines consumed 40 million gigawatt-hours of electricity a year, bringing the country's system losses down to the level of Korea would generate as much as P16 billion in electricity cost savings.

"Right now, quite a lot of (distribution utilities) are going above the cap, although some are in the 8-9 percent range. Most of them are averaging between 10 and 11 percent," he explained.

For those power distributors who had been able to keep their system losses below the cap, he said there were no incentives for them to maintain that level or to strive to further reduce their system losses.

"What we're thinking is that if they can reduce, they'll be given some incentives. What we're trying to do now is to unbundle the system losses, to see how much of that is technical and how much is administrative," he said.

"Once we've unbundled, we'll know what level is technical. That will help us come up with solutions to the problem, including law enforcement," he added.

Alcordo said the ERC had yet to come up with concrete incentives for reduced system losses, although tax perks could be one of them, if feasible.

## Regulator sets timetable for deciding on cases

TO PREVENT CASES AND PETITIONS from dragging on for years, the Energy Regulatory Commission has set deadlines for resolving cases.

According to ERC, the new set of rules provides for the speedy disposition of cases, discouraging delays and long drawn out proceedings.

As all cases would be timebound, there would be little or no room at all for "unwarranted postponements or other dilatory tactics," ERC added.

With these new rules in place, cases that normally take between three and five months to resolve can be decided on in as short as a month.

Despite ensuring a quicker disposition of cases, the ERC said the basic principles of due process would not be compromised.

Additional proceedings such as expository hearings and consumer hours would still be conducted.

This is to ensure that all stakeholders, particularly residential customers, would be able to clearly understand all applications that would affect them, chief of which would be those concerning rate increases, the ERC added.

ERC commissioner Alejandro Barin said all parties would be required to submit pre-trial briefs, which would contain the nature of their application or opposition, why they were filing a petition why they were opposing, how many witnesses they would present, and what documents and evidence they would submit during the hearings.

He explained that this would prevent additional oppositors from coming into the picture in the middle of the hearings, thus preventing delays in the resolution of cases.

The ERC's proposed rules of practice and procedures was subjected to a public consultation last Friday.

While not yet formalized, Barin said some provisions under the new set of rules were already being implemented in the ERC to ensure the speedy resolution of cases.

"The existing rules were promulgated before the (Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001), thus, after the effectivity of the Epira, the ERC was forced to sometimes improvise certain provisions to comply with the some Epira requirements.

Accordingly, we decided it's about time that the rules be updated to make sure that it is consistent with the said law," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said.

The ERC's rules and practice and procedures had been around since 1987, then under the now defunct Energy Regulatory Board. *Abigail L. Ho*

## Viva Macau plans flights to Davao starting Aug.

DAVAO CITY—VIVA MACAU AIRLINES is finalizing plans to mount direct flights to Davao this year, Councilor Peter Laviña said.

Laviña, chair of the Sangguniang Panlungsod's trade and industry committee, said Viva Macau Airlines has scheduled its maiden flight in August, in time for the Kadayawan Festival.

The festival, which means thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, is one of the city's major activities that have been drawing attention from tourists.

It is also the time when *durian*, the popular product of Davao, is abundant.

Laviña said Viva Macau Airlines chief executive officer Andrew Payne had told him about the plan.

Payne and several other airline executives recently visited the city to discuss the planned direct flights.

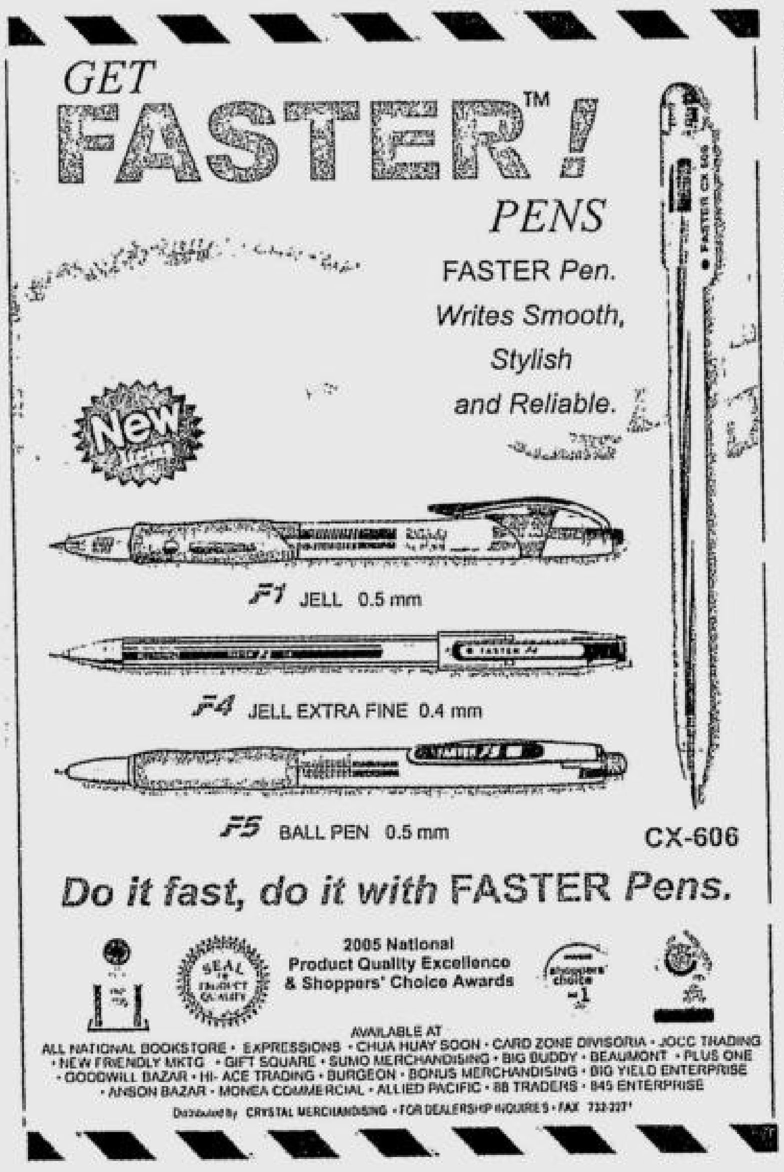
He said Payne had told him that the Viva Macau group was now working to comply with regulatory requirements for the planned flight to Davao City through the help of Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio Floirendo.

"I believe this is Davao's biggest jackpot because this will be the first foreign airline to fly to the city since we opened the new airport three years ago," Laviña said.

"If it is successful, I know that others will follow," he said.

Laviña said airline officials also told him that they planned to make Davao as Viva Macau Airline's springboard to south Pacific destinations, including Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea.

He said the new carrier also aims to bring in tourists from Macau. *Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau*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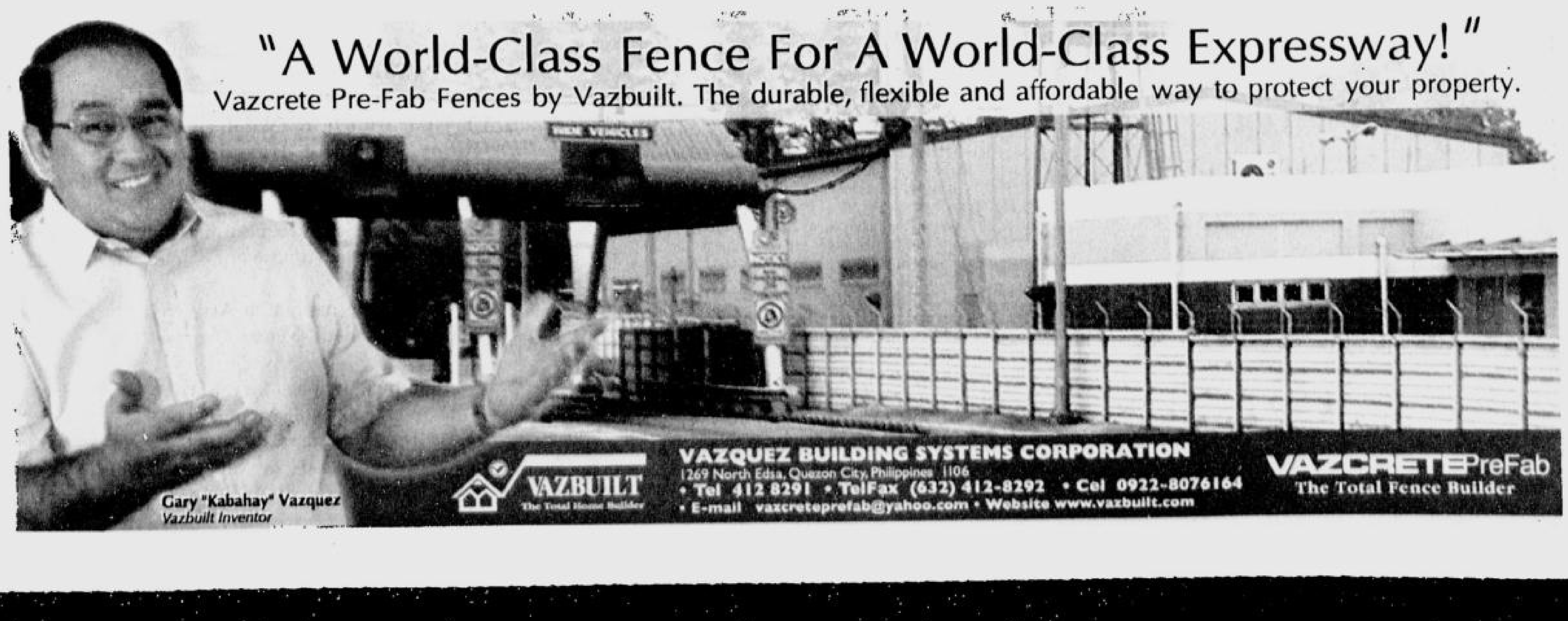
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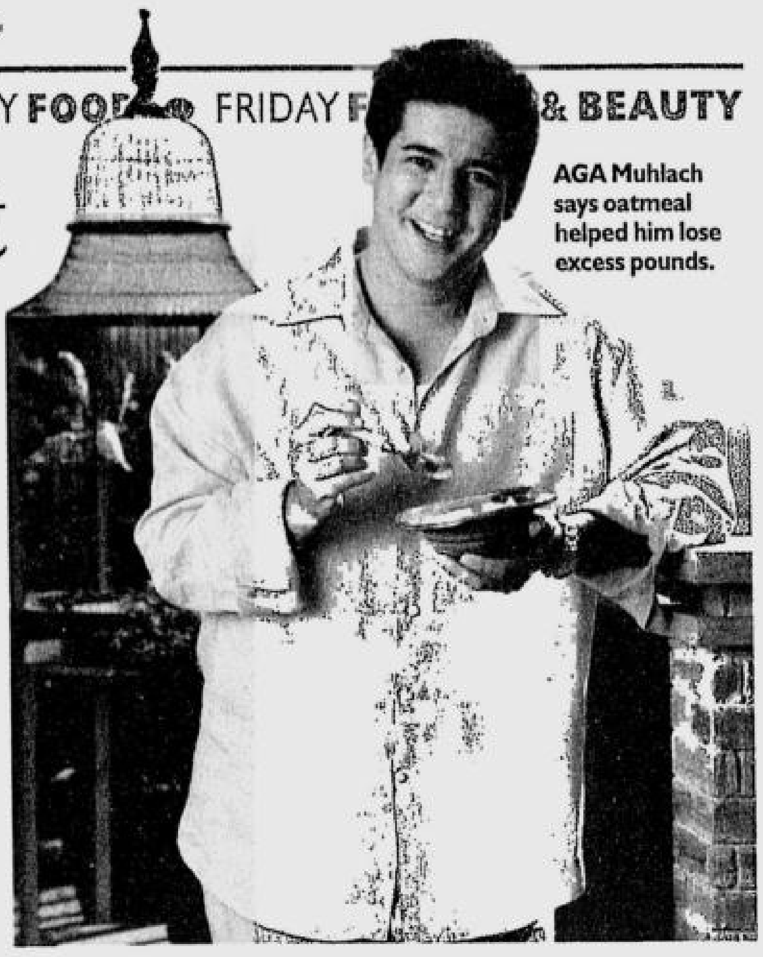
# Muhlach twins adopting dad's habit



AGA Muhlach says oatmeal helped him lose excess pounds.

**By Linda B. Bolido**

AGA MUHLACH BELIEVES IN starting 'em young. So he has introduced his twins, Atasha Aaron and Antonio Andres, to his habit of having oatmeal every day.

The new celebrity endorser of Quaker Oats, the best-known oatmeal brand, got a very emphatic reminder recently of the healthful properties of oatmeal.

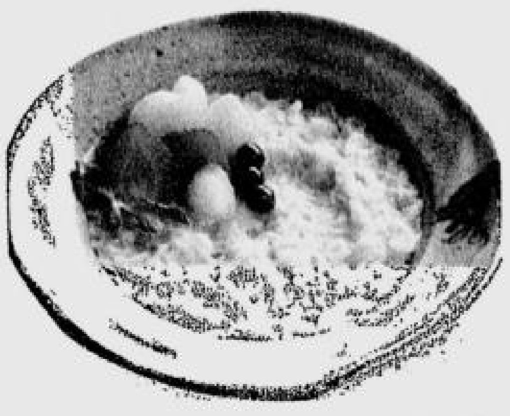
His cholesterol level, he says, exceeded the desirable level of less than 200 (though he is quick to add it isn't because of all the fried chicken he eats).

Though Muhlach says oatmeal has always been part of his diet, a regular regimen of at least 70 grams of oatmeal every day brought his cholesterol level down to a healthy level of less than 200.

His daily intake of oatmeal, not just at breakfast but sometimes several times a day, also enabled him to lose some 15 pounds in just three months.

Now down to 160 pounds, Muhlach is working to lose 20 pounds more.

Oatmeal not only has fiber but also acts like a sponge, mopping up cholesterol, particularly the bad kind, in the body. High levels of bad cholesterol increase the risk of heart disease.



**THOUGH** oatmeal is usually eaten with milk and fruits, it is also a popular ingredient for baked goods.

Quaker Oats says, through its "30-day Challenge" campaign, volunteer participants from different companies registered significant reduction in cholesterol levels.

Participants were asked to have a 70-gram bowl (one cup of uncooked oats) of oatmeal a day for 30 days.

In 2003, the first year of the challenge, out of 94 participants, 62 percent lowered their cholesterol levels by an average of 27 points.

The following year, 72 percent of 98 participants lowered their cholesterol levels by an average of 25 points.

Last year, 72 percent of 94 participants lowered their cholesterol levels by an average of 25 points.

At the end of the program, Quaker Oats says participants said they learned to be more health-conscious, adopting a healthy diet and making some changes in their lifestyles like becoming more active and exercising more.

About 80 percent said they would continue to eat oatmeal every day.

Muhlach and the Quaker Oats people stress that a daily dose of oatmeal need not be just a bowl with milk and probably fruit slices.

The actor says his wife, Charlene Gonzales, is also a believer in healthy eating. She uses oatmeal in several dishes, like raisin-oatmeal cookies, making it easier for their twins, who are now in preschool, to bring healthy *baon* to school.

For oatmeal recipes, visit http://www.quakeroatmeal.com

# Infidelity to the self

**INSIDE OUT**

*Cory Quirino*

IT IS AN INTRIGUING thought that we all can be guilty of being unfaithful to ourselves. While infidelity is generally considered as an act against another party, it is actually even more devastating when committed against one's self.

The time has arrived for a higher order of the definition of fidelity.

### Self-betrayal

We are guilty of letting ourselves down when we:

**Settle for less.** People set standards for themselves. The gauge is set by you and by no one else. When we define who we are and what we desire most in life, we are already setting the standards.

By raising the bar a notch higher, our expectations are also raised. Automatically, our consciousness is programmed to attract only what is best—not just better, but best.

By settling for less, you will get just that—less than what you bargained for—less love, less abundance, less health, less peace of mind.

**Remain in denial.** Because of the human pursuit of power, stability, security, emotions are often treated as useless appendages but with the capacity to cause pain. The result: the regression of emotions.

According to Dr. Gary Zukav, best-selling author of self-empowerment books, "the irrelevancy we give to our feelings influences our daily lives—our values and priorities. We suppress our feelings for the sake of maintaining the status quo. And the modern-day paragons of this new 'virtue' are the hard-nosed businessman, the iron-fisted military officer, the hard-fighting politician, the battered wife who will suffer the blows for the sake of family unity. When we are detached from our emotions, we become more disconnected from our own true selves. So ask yourself, 'Am I in denial about myself?'"

**Give up on ourselves.** There is a voice that never stops talking. And that is our inner guide, teacher and friend. Some call it conscience. Others, consciousness. It speaks to us constantly each time we need to make a decision no matter how big or small it may be.

And its chatter is constant for it does not know the meaning of silence—forever regulating, demanding, advising, nagging. Its role is to encourage, uplift and inspire. But the moment we pollute the positive talk with fear and uncertainty, the talk becomes negative. Its language will transform from encouraging to discouraging, creating to destroying.

By giving in to the negative, we give up on ourselves. And we lose faith in ourselves, in others, in life and in God.

Stop the bad talk. Stay with the good. Believe that you are deserving of goodness.

**Look for a scapegoat.** When we blame others for catastrophes in our lives, we are removing the responsibility for our choices. Self-exoneration is an act of cowardice. It is done by a person who has no courage to face life squarely or the truth frontally. It is, after all, so much easier to wash one's hands in innocence rather than accept responsibility with bravery, passing on the blame to someone else (i.e., your gym trainer for the weight gain, your husband for your shattered emotions, your boss for your mental exhaustion).

### Renewal of vows

There is only one you in this world. So give it all you've got. Beginning today, promise yourself that you will give yourself more...

- **Honor.** Your body needs more caring, your heart more nurturing, your spirit more liberating. Do the things that will only contribute to your well-being.
- **Love.** You deserve what you expect and you get what you believe you deserve. So believe in yourself by loving yourself better now. If you are in search of a love that will truly fulfill you and bring you closer to your authentic self then, when you find it, claim it and give it a special place in your heart and in your life.
- **Praise.** The first praise you receive should come from yourself, not from others. Appreciate your value and you will grow in confidence. Praise the graces in your life and more praises will come to you. Praise life and life will praise you in return.
- **Covenant with self.** Sign this affirmation now. It is your commitment to becoming more faithful to yourself: "Beginning today, I will be faithful to my dreams, my heart, myself. Signed: __________."

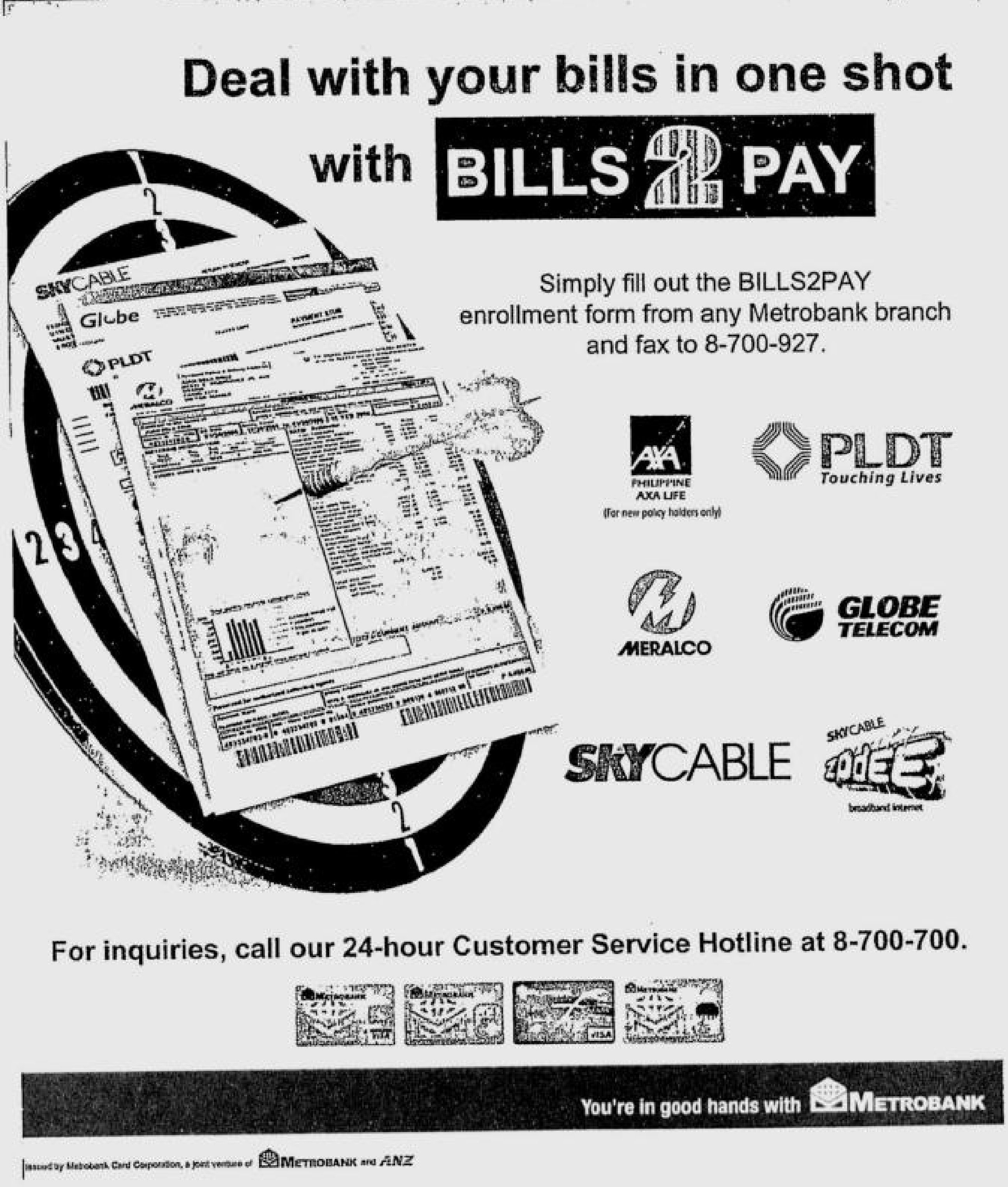
Love and light!

*Text Smart - CQ to 2966 for your beauty and wellness update.*

El Shaddai leader's daughter joins IAME

Emmanuel Noli T. Santos, IAME chairman-CEO, welcomes Sherry Velarde Yambao, daughter of El Shaddai Servant Leader Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde, who enrolled at the B.S. Management program of the International Academy of Management and Economics (I AME [eye-aim]) to better prepare herself for corporate career. She finished her Associate in Arts at the College of San Mateo, Silicon Valley, California, USA. She is currently vice-president for finance and administration of MAVCO Holdings, Inc. Bro. Mike Velarde obtained his MBA degree at IUF-IAME in 1980.

ADVT.



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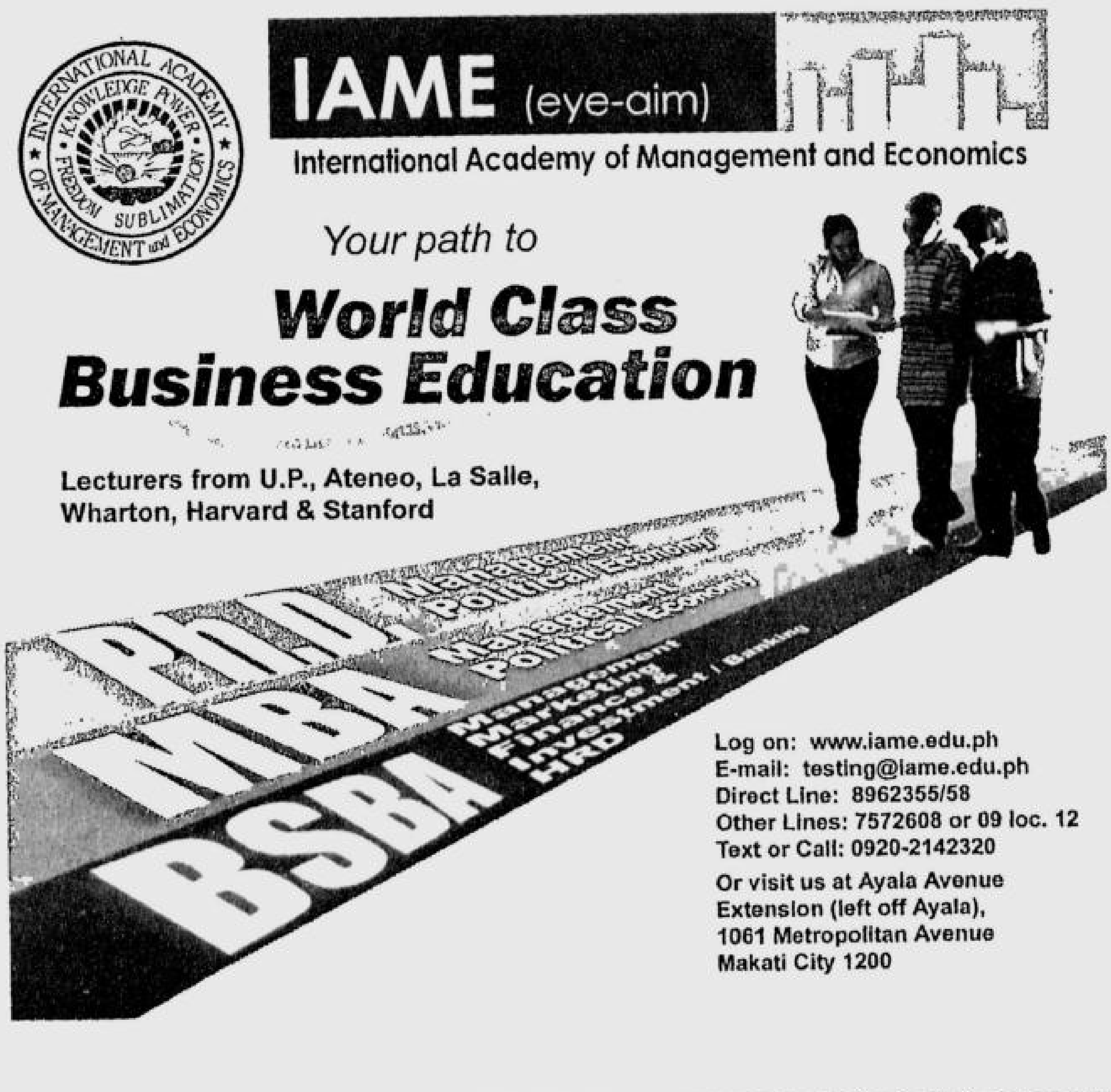

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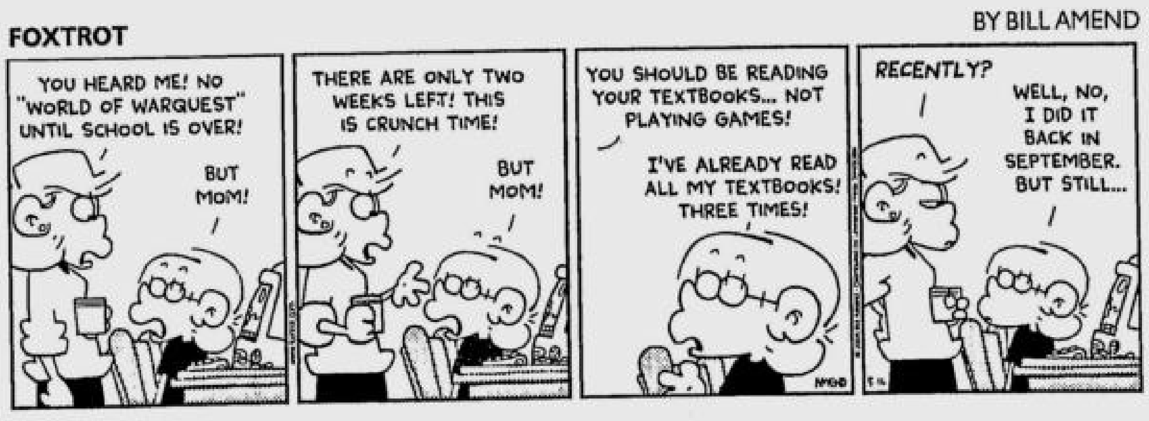
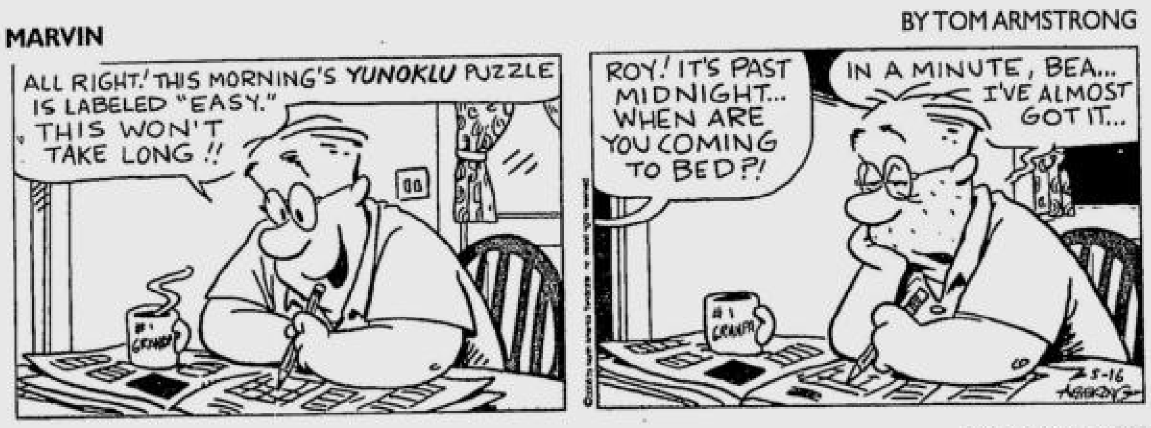
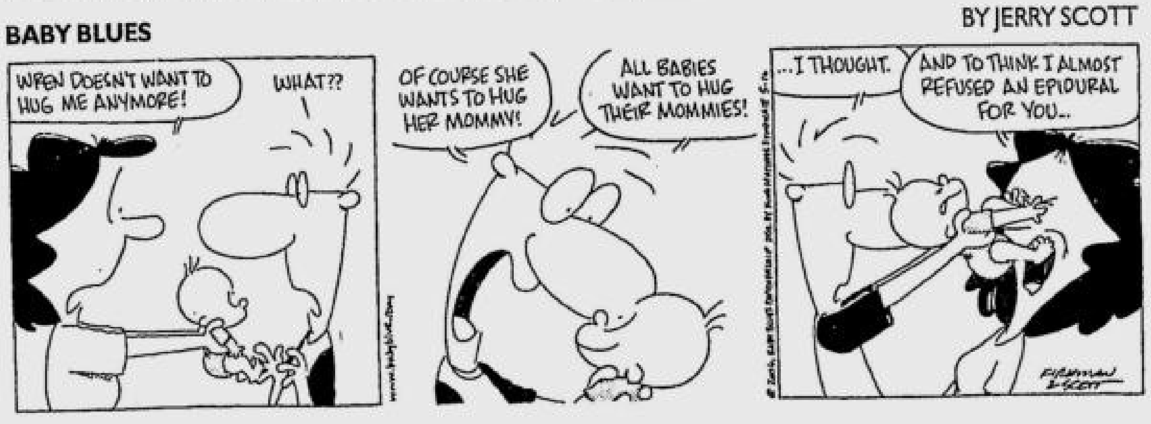

YOU HEARD ME! NO "WORLD OF WARQUEST" UNTIL SCHOOL IS OVER!
BUT MOM!
THERE ARE ONLY TWO WEEKS LEFT! THIS IS CRUNCH TIME!
BUT MOM!
YOU SHOULD BE READING YOUR TEXTBOOKS... NOT PLAYING GAMES!
I'VE ALREADY READ ALL MY TEXTBOOKS! THREE TIMES!
RECENTLY?
WELL, NO, I DID IT BACK IN SEPTEMBER. BUT STILL...

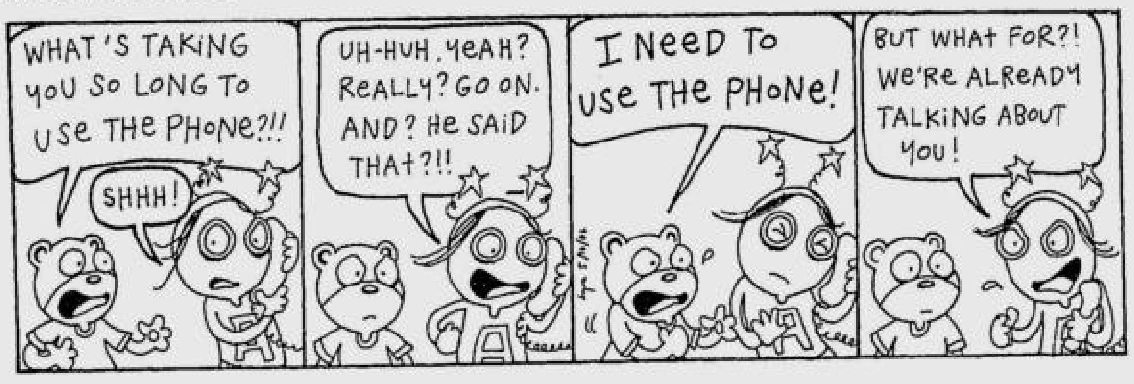
**MARVIN** BY TOM ARMSTRONG


ALL RIGHT! THIS MORNING'S YUNOKLU PUZZLE IS LABELED "EASY." THIS WON'T TAKE LONG!!
ROY! IT'S PAST MIDNIGHT... WHEN ARE YOU COMING TO BED?!
IN A MINUTE, BEA... I'VE ALMOST GOT IT...
#1 GRAMPA
5-16

**BABY BLUES** BY JERRY SCOTT


WREN DOESN'T WANT TO HUG ME ANYMORE!
WHAT??
OF COURSE SHE WANTS TO HUG HER MOMMY!
ALL BABIES WANT TO HUG THEIR MOMMIES!
...I THOUGHT.
AND TO THINK I ALMOST REFUSED AN EPIDURAL FOR YOU..

**ATOMO AND WEBOY** BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG TO USE THE PHONE?!!
SHHH!
UH-HUH. YEAH? REALLY? GO ON. AND? HE SAID THAT?!!
I NEED TO USE THE PHONE!
BUT WHAT FOR?! WE'RE ALREADY TALKING ABOUT YOU!

# HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You're not afraid to express yourself, even if it means being flamboyant. Your style is so distinctive that others often imitate you. You are soft-spoken, composed and self-assured, but privately, you are intense and passionate. In your 20s and 30s, you explore life with enthusiasm. Color is important to you. Focus on your closest relationships this year.

**Birthdate of:** David Boreanaz, actor; Debra Winger, actress; Pierce Brosnan, actor.

**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** People notice you today. Conversations with bosses, parents, teachers and authority figures are significant. By the end of the day, you see that others are ready to help you. (Great!)

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** This is a favorable day for your sign. Take up a new study or learn something you never knew before. Be open to new and different ideas. Explore other cultures.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** This is a good day to pay some bills. Straighten out loosey-goosey matters about shared property. Define your boundaries about responsibilities for others.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** You have to be prepared to go more than halfway when dealing with others today. It's not a big deal. It's more a generosity of mind and attitude.

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** This is an extremely productive day at work for you. You're in the mood to do painstaking, detailed, routine tasks. Late in the day, you'll be proud of your accomplishments.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** This is a wonderful day for artistic efforts. You're in touch with your creative talents and, at the same time, prepared to work at whatever you want to achieve. It's a good day to teach children as well.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** Family discussions are important today. Make some long-range plans. Do something that helps you feel more secure about your future, especially in your domestic world.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** This is a good day for deals, negotiations, buying and selling, and shopping in general. You have your eye out for something practical and useful that you want to last a long time.

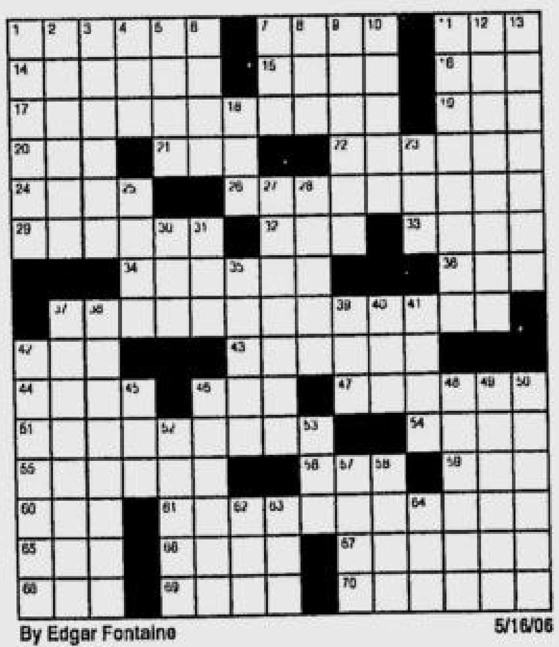
**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** Commerce and business in general can flourish today. You want to do things correctly. For example, you might get the approval that you need from the government.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** The Moon is in your sign today. This heightens your sense of destiny. (You intend to be somebody and achieve something you're proud of.) Groups and friends are helpful.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** Work alone as much as possible today. Solitude will help you sort something out. You might see the best way to approach someone important.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** An older, wiser or more experienced person can help you today. Be open to this advice. After all, you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

# DAILY CROSSWORD



By Edgar Fontaine
Dighton, MA

5/16/06

**ACROSS**
1 Group of seven
7 Well-tuned engine sound
11 Actress Tyler
14 Aquatic mammals
15 "The African Queen" screenwriter
16 "__ Fine Day"
17 Scrooge's clerk
19 TV adjunct
20 Brief life story
21 __ Lanka
22 In a plucky way
24 Vim and vigor
26 With 61A, Marine cartoon hero
29 Bring back
32 Dog tags
33 Favored soprano
34 Change genetically
36 Tycoon Turner
37 Animated construction worker
42 Yore
43 TV classic, "__ Room"
44 Manner
46 Again, in music
47 Potemkin mutiny site
51 Dolphin in Canton
54 Gooey mass
55 Old sayings
56 UFO personnel
59 Personal pension $
60 Part of RSVP
61 See 26A
65 Remote ctrl. button
66 Ballet wear
67 Actress Smith
68 Mos. and mos.
69 Look for
70 Wrote in a tiresome style

**DOWN**
1 Weeper
2 French star
3 McHale's TV craft
4 Old-time gumshoe
5 Goofs up
6 Russian sovereign
7 Pol's cash provider
8 Yuck!
9 Rules
10 Mark new prices
11 Affectionate nip
12 On Easy Street?
13 Beyond naughty
18 "__ the season..."
23 Part of MD
25 Unfeeling
27 Casino worker
28 Concert hall
30 Same old same old
31 Utmost degree
35 Eagle's nest
37 More gory
38 Eccentrics
39 NYSE entry
40 _ _ Zeppelin
41 Residue
42 Ambassador and his staff
45 Easter treat
46 Creamy soup
48 Broken-bone supporters
49 Aerial combat mission
50 Humiliated
52 Takes five
53 End of auction?
57 Office fill-in
58 Go a round with?
62 Shoshone
63 Arctic sea bird
64 Gone by

**Monday's Puzzle Solved**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | E | R | U | ■ | M | A | Z | D | A | ■ | B | R | I | G |
| I | C | O | N | ■ | A | V | O | I | D | ■ | R | E | N | O |
| C | R | A | Z | Y | H | O | R | S | E | ■ | U | N | T | O |
| A | U | D | I | O | ■ | C | A | T | ■ | U | S | E | R | S |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | P | U | C | E | ■ | A | R | C | H | W | A | Y |
| G | R | O | ■ | V | A | T | ■ | S | E | L | F | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| R | A | P | I | E | R | ■ | A | T | T | A | I | N | E | D |
| A | G | E | S | ■ | P | O | W | E | R | ■ | R | A | Z | E |
| B | U | L | L | H | O | R | N | ■ | E | M | E | R | I | L |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | E | A | R | N | ■ | P | A | R | ■ | C | O | T |
| M | I | N | O | L | T | A | ■ | I | D | L | E | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| S | N | I | F | F | ■ | M | M | E | ■ | E | L | V | I | S |
| D | E | E | M | ■ | G | E | O | R | G | E | W | I | L | L |
| O | R | C | A | ■ | A | N | D | R | E | ■ | E | L | I | A |
| S | T | E | N | ■ | S | T | E | E | L | ■ | S | E | E | P |

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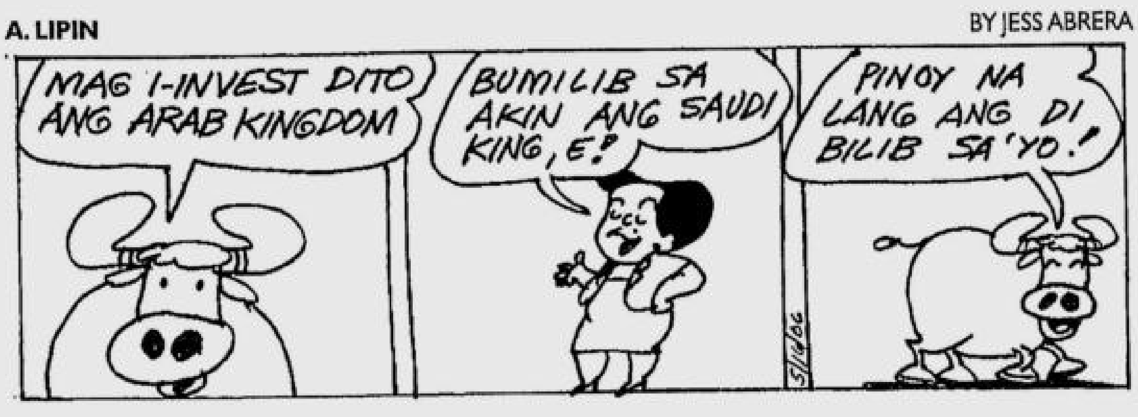
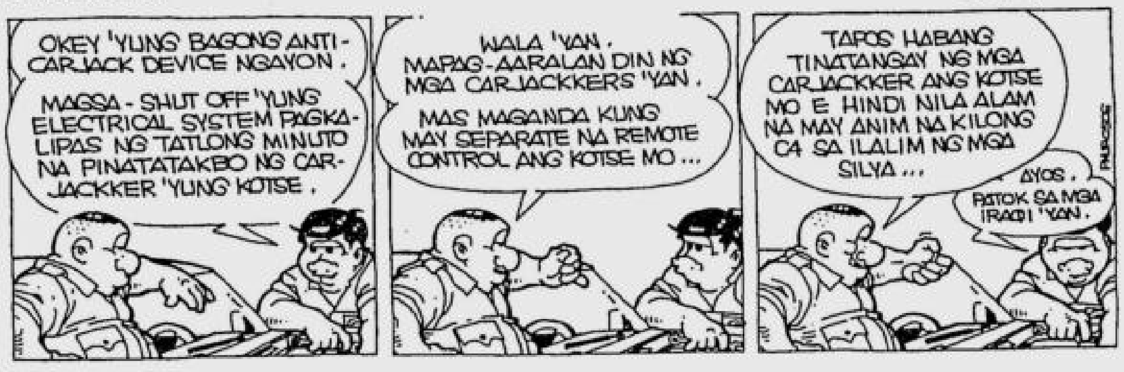
5/15/06

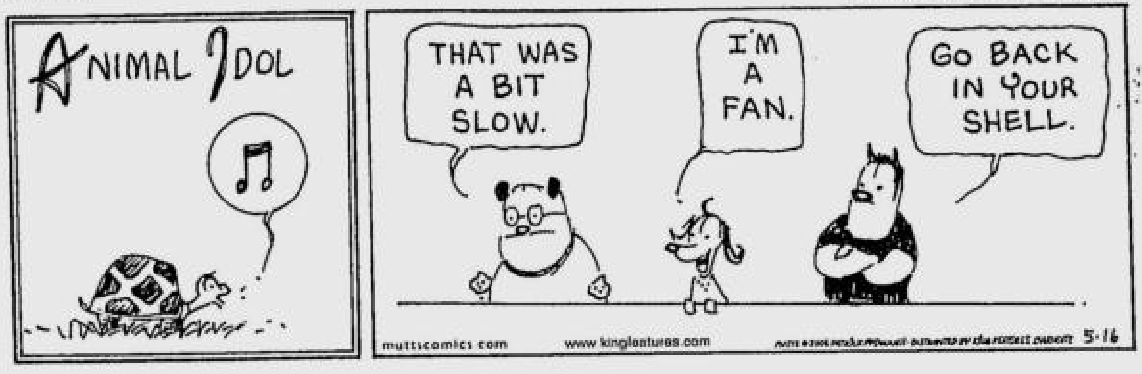
**A. LIPIN** BY JESS ABRERA


MAG I-INVEST DITO ANG ARAB KINGDOM
BUMILIB SA AKIN ANG SAUDI KING, E!
PINOY NA LANG ANG DI BILIB SA 'YO!
5/16/06

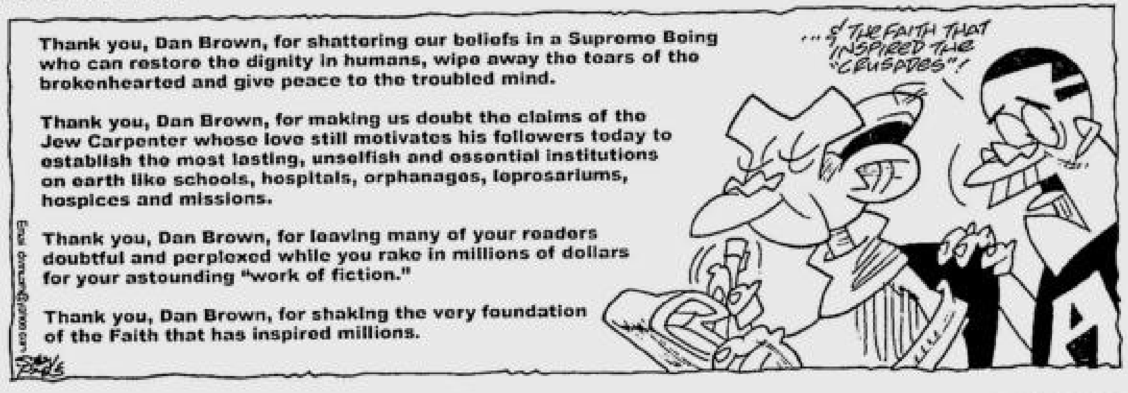
**PUGAD BABOY** BY P.M. JUNIOR


OKEY 'YUNG BAGONG ANTI-CARJACK DEVICE NGAYON.
MAGSA-SHUT OFF 'YUNG ELECTRICAL SYSTEM PAGKALIPAS NG TATLONG MINUTO NA PINATATAKBO NG CARJACKKER 'YUNG KOTSE.
WALA 'YAN. MAPAG-AARALAN DIN NG MGA CARJACKKERS 'YAN.
MAS MAGANDA KUNG MAY SEPARATE NA REMOTE CONTROL ANG KOTSE MO...
TAPOS HABANG TINATANGAY NG MGA CARJACKKER ANG KOTSE MO E HINDI NILA ALAM NA MAY ANIM NA KILONG C4 SA ILALIM NG MGA SILYA...
AYOS. PATOK SA MGA IRAQI 'YAN.

**MUTTS** BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ANIMAL IDOL
THAT WAS A BIT SLOW.
I'M A FAN.
GO BACK IN YOUR SHELL.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
5·16

**DIVINE COMEDY** BY STEVEN PABALINAS



Thank you, Dan Brown, for shattering our beliefs in a Supreme Being who can restore the dignity in humans, wipe away the tears of the brokenhearted and give peace to the troubled mind.

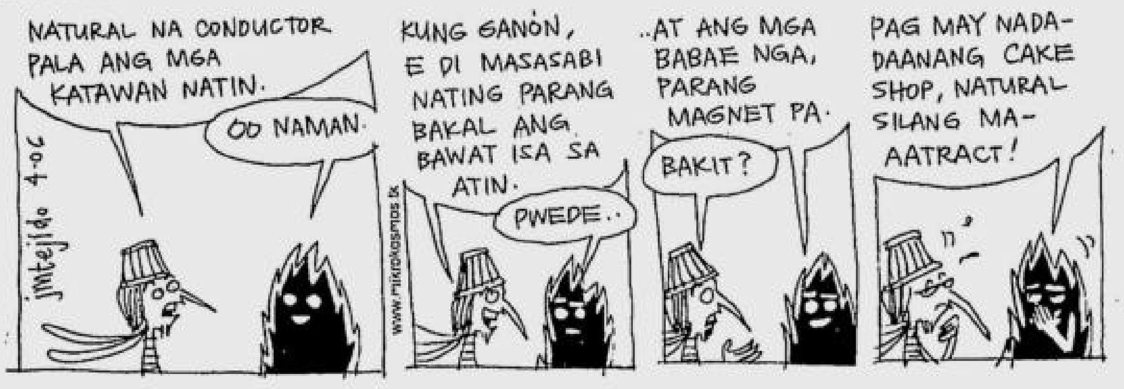
Thank you, Dan Brown, for making us doubt the claims of the Jew Carpenter whose love still motivates his followers today to establish the most lasting, unselfish and essential institutions on earth like schools, hospitals, orphanages, leprosariums, hospices and missions.

Thank you, Dan Brown, for leaving many of your readers doubtful and perplexed while you rake in millions of dollars for your astounding "work of fiction."

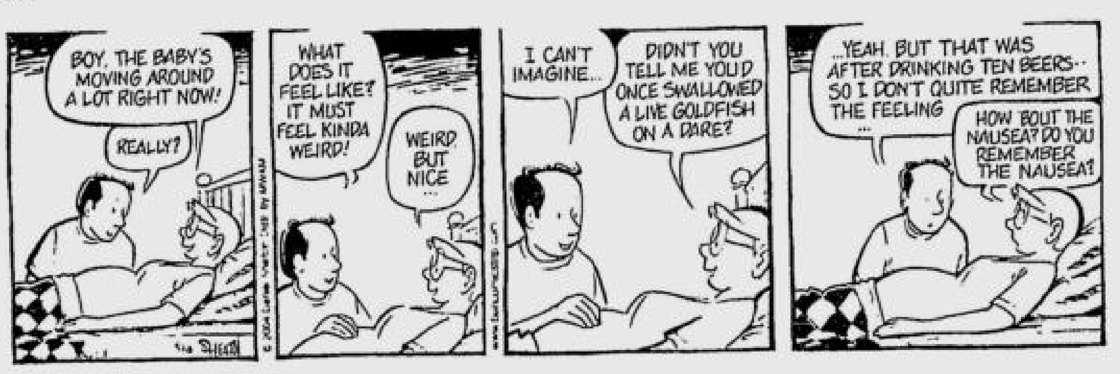
Thank you, Dan Brown, for shaking the very foundation of the Faith that has inspired millions.

...& THE FAITH THAT INSPIRED THE "CRUSADES"!

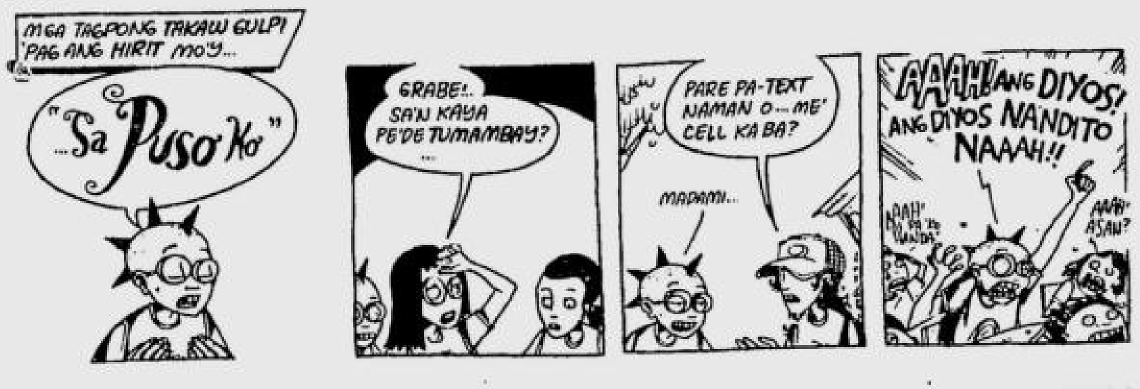
**MIKROKOSMOS** BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NATURAL NA CONDUCTOR PALA ANG MGA KATAWAN NATIN.
OO NAMAN.
KUNG GANON, E DI MASASABI NATING PARANG BAKAL ANG BAWAT ISA SA ATIN.
PWEDE..
..AT ANG MGA BABAE NGA, PARANG MAGNET PA.
BAKIT?
PAG MAY NADADAANANG CAKE SHOP, NATURAL SILANG MA-AATRACT!
jmtejido 4-06
www.mikrokosmos.tk

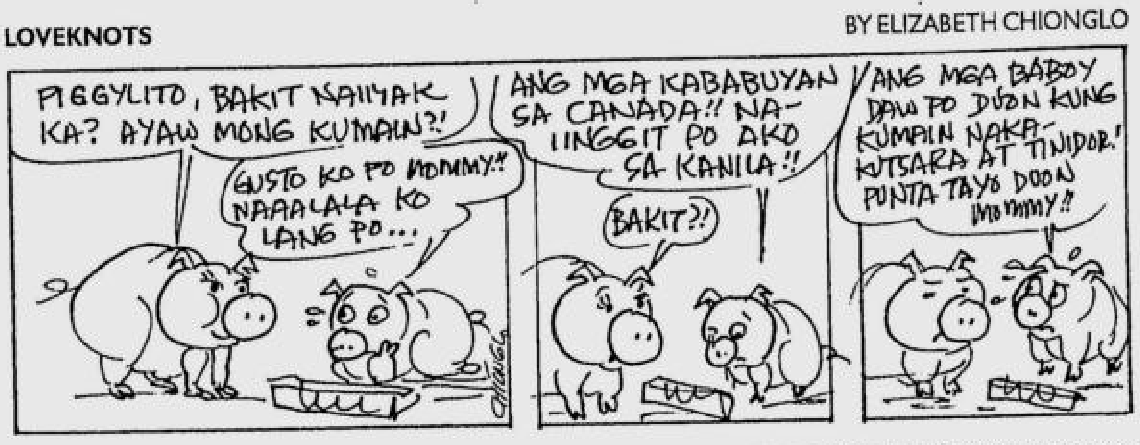
**BEN** BY DANIEL SHELTON


BOY, THE BABY'S MOVING AROUND A LOT RIGHT NOW!
REALLY?
WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE? IT MUST FEEL KINDA WEIRD!
WEIRD BUT NICE
I CAN'T IMAGINE...
DIDN'T YOU TELL ME YOU'D ONCE SWALLOWED A LIVE GOLDFISH ON A DARE?
...YEAH, BUT THAT WAS AFTER DRINKING TEN BEERS.. SO I DON'T QUITE REMEMBER THE FEELING
HOW 'BOUT THE NAUSEA? DO YOU REMEMBER THE NAUSEA?

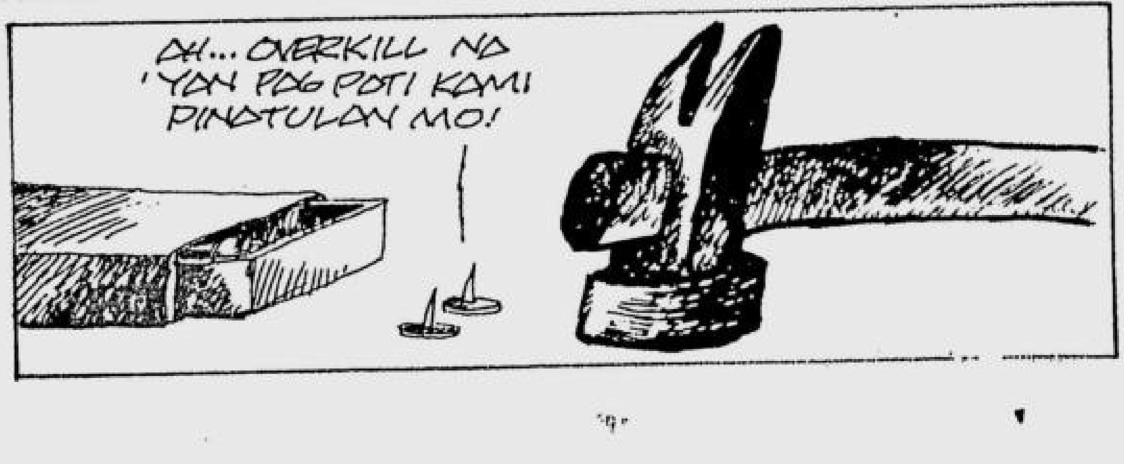
**KIKO MACHINE** BY MANIX ABRERA


MGA TAGPONG TAKAW GULPI 'PAG ANG HIRIT MO'Y...
"...SA PUSO KO"
GRABE!.. SA'N KAYA PE'DE TUMAMBAY?
PARE PA-TEXT NAMAN O... ME' CELL KA BA?
MADAMI...
AAAH! ANG DIYOS! ANG DIYOS NANDITO NAAAH!!
AAAH! ASAN?

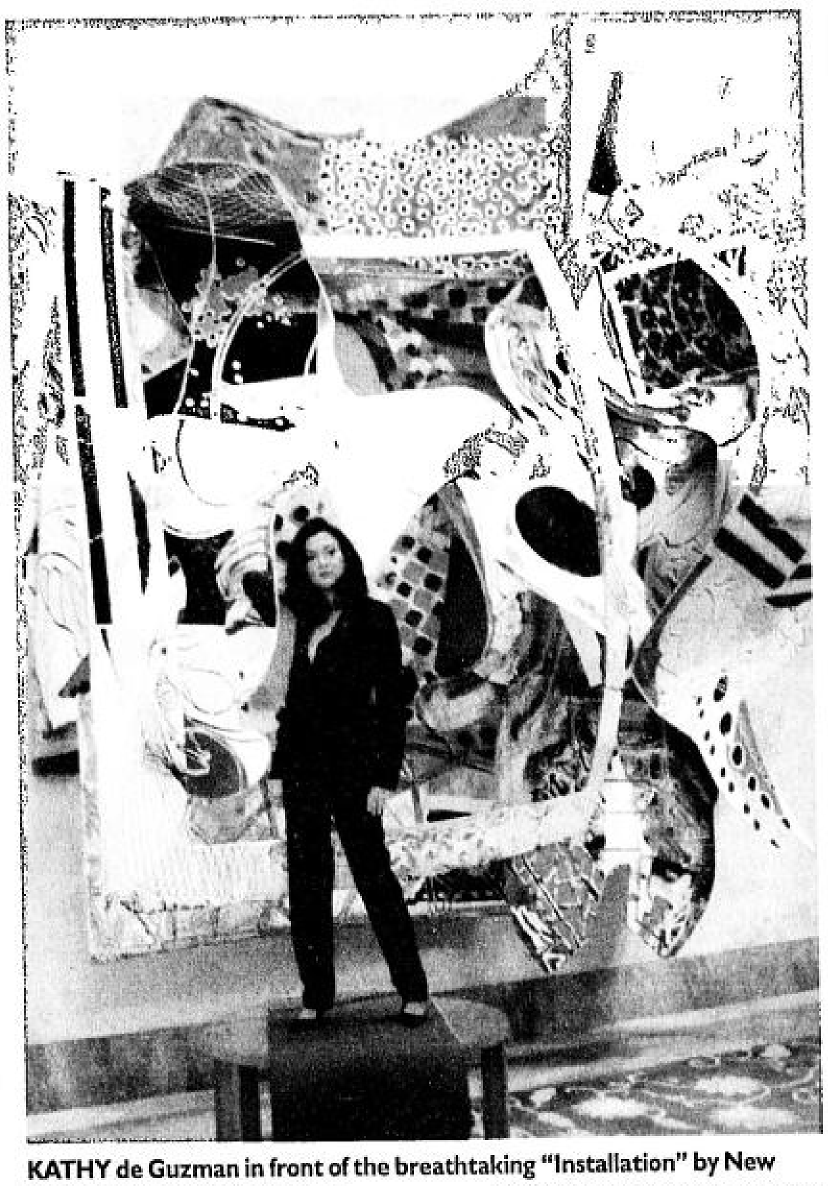
**LOVEKNOTS** BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PIGGYLITO, BAKIT NAIIYAK KA? AYAW MONG KUMAIN?!
GUSTO KO PO MOMMY!! NAAALALA KO LANG PO...
ANG MGA KABABUYAN SA CANADA!! NAIINGGIT PO AKO SA KANILA!!
BAKIT?!
ANG MGA BABOY DAW PO DUON KUNG KUMAIN NAKA-KUTSARA AT TINIDOR! PUNTA TAYO DOON MOMMY!!
CHIONGLO

**TULDOK** BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


AH... OVERKILL NA 'YAN PAG POTI KAMI PINATULAN MO!

**FRENCH** Erwin Le Gouar, Christopher Noto and Singapore Tatler's Wenli Tang

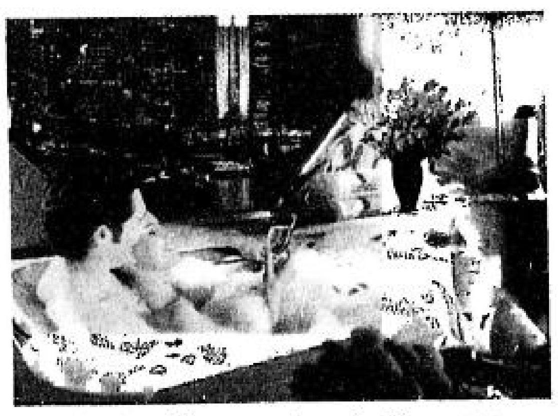


**KATHY** de Guzman in front of the breathtaking "Installation" by New York's renowned Frank Stella

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RITZ CARLTON HOTEL

**DURING** the to-die-for champagne brunch at Ritz Carlton: *moi*; mega chef of the hotel Philip Agnese and wife, former Manille's Air France top gal, Therese Agnese; Ritz Carlton's Zannie Leong; Anton S.D.; and Wig Tysmans

**RITZ** Carlton Millennia's director of public relations, Anton Kilayko



**THE RITZ** provides a sanctuary for the senses.

**KATHY** de G. gets a retouch from Singapore's top hairstylist, Colin Yeo

**THE SPECTACULAR** Ritz Carlton Suite offers a view of Singapore's bay and skyline.

# Shooting in Singapore

IT IS EXCITING TO JET OFF TO another country for a photo shoot, *palanggas*. And excited we were, as we landed in Singapore to do a fabulous 10-page spread on that awesome stylish woman of substance, **Kathy de Guzman**, for the May edition of the Philippine Tatler now on sale.

Kathy de G., named one of "Singapore's Top Hostesses," has lived there for the past six years, since her husband, brilliant country manager of ING Bank Manila **Bing de Guzman**, moved to the Lion City, as CEO of Asia-Pacific of ING Asia Private Bank Ltd., *palanggas*.

From the Changi Airport, we were whisked off in two BMW limos to the ultra-chic, elegant Ritz Carlton Millennia Singapore. The ever-efficient secret weapon of the hotel, director of public relation, our very own Southern gent **Anton Kilayko**, made the arrangements for our three-day stay in the fab hotel.

The whole management staff gave us a warm welcome at the entrance of the Ritz. Our jaws dropped as we entered our 25th floor sky-high suites with a view of the city skyline all around, even from the huge, gorgeous bathroom, *palanggas*.

**MANDARIN** Oriental Manila's "Manamit! An Ilonggo Culinary Festival," until May 19, at Captain's Bar, features chef Mary Pauline Gorriceta-Banusing.

**WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH**

*Maurice Arcache*

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

Once settled, our divine escort during our stay, Ritz Carlton's dedicated beauty and brains, **Zannie Leong**, treated us to an absolutely excellent Sunday champagne brunch buffet at the hotel's grand greenhouse restaurant with this colossal modern glass sculpture by world-renowned artist **Dale Chihuly**. He also did the famous Bellagio ceiling in Las Vegas, dahlings.

Here, **Anton San Diego** and **Wig Tysmans**, went overboard with the endless selection of California, Asian and Mediterranean dishes. Yes, *palanggas*, by far, it's the best champagne brunch in Asia.

That night, Kathy de G. prepared a fantastic dinner that included her cook's specialty, the yummy Hainanese chicken. During the pre-dinner cocktails, our whole gang—Tatler editor in chief **Anton S.D.**, Tatler society and lifestyle editor M. **Arcache** (as in *moi!*), renowned photographer **Wig T.**, and his assistant **Cocoy Sarmenta**—was introduced to Kathy's Singaporean hairdresser, good-looking swoon bait **Colin Yeo**; talented makeup artist, fun **Eugena Ng**; her brilliant stylist and personal friend, a renowned couturier who lived in Paris for several years before settling back in Singapore, **Yang Derong**; plus a couple of Kathy and Bing's close friends.

The following day, with the help of Zennie Ng, Anton S.D. and Wig T. chose the locations for the shoot.

We started promptly at 10 a.m., at the fab glass lobby with the stunning sculptural masterpiece by famed New Yorker **Frank Stella** at the grand entrance. Here we did Kathy's fantastic photo for this month's cover, *palanggas*.

Kathy was an absolute trooper, not complaining even once during the shoot in different parts of the ultra deluxe hotel, *palanggas*.

After a quick change of outfit, a different hairdo and fresh makeup, Kathy posed so professionally in front of "Moby Dick," a fantastic three-dimensional mural by Stella, at the entrance of the tropical garden pool with an impressive waterfall that cascaded from a modern tunnel of webbed steel and glass leading to a superb seafood restaurant called Snappers.

A couple of steps from the poolside is a state-of-the-art fitness center and spa.

Our next stop was the humongous grand ballroom that could host an event of epic proportions.

After a quick lunch of the hotel's famous huge hamburgers (I opted for a yummy, healthy green salad) at 3 p.m., and another quick change, we went to the fabulous hard-to-beat Ritz Carlton grand suite. Kathy was photographed in different poses and gowns in different parts of the wow suite, *palanggas*.

The whole shoot was over 10 hours later, at 8 p.m. Kathy popped the cork of a bottle of champagne, while chatting with Singapore Tatler's vivacious bureau chief **Claire Hanson** and Tatler's deputy bureau chief, adorable **Wenli Tang**, who we met, with her dashing husband **Bernard Fung**, at the beautiful De Guzman mansion during dinner the night before.

Then we were all treated to a superb Chinese dinner by Kathy de G. at the hotel's renowned Summer Pavilion that serves Cantonese cuisine fit for a royal entourage, *palanggas*.

It was a perfect ending for three days of work and the pleasure of being a guest at the absolutely awesome Ritz Carlton Millennia Singapore, thanks to the hotel's prime mover and shaker, Anton Kilayko, *palanggas*.

Check out the online booking through www.ritzcarlton.com or call direct, toll-free, (65) 64345177.

Yes, dahlings, you're in for champagne wishes and caviar dreams at the Ritz.

## Food fest

Iloilo was in Cosmo Manille once again, at the elegant Mandarin Oriental, when it launched its heritage food festival as part of the National Heritage Month. Aptly billed "Manamit! (as in, "it's so good") Ilonggo Culinary Festival," it is ongoing until May 19, at the Captain's Bar, *palanggas*.

Opening this definitely not-to-miss event were Mandarin Oriental Manila's dashing **Helmut Gaisberger**, together with mega talented guest chef and restaurateur, brilliant Southern beauty with the four B's, **Pauline Gorriceta-Banusing** of Villa Regata Ilonggo Seafood Restaurant who was trained at the Culinary Institute of America in New York, and at the Institute of Culinary Education, formerly Peter Kump's New York, no less, *palanggas*.

Her trip was arranged by Cebu Pacific's vivacious spitfire Ana Mendoza.

Highlights of the happening, *palanggas*, included an exhibit of former Sen. **Loren Legarda**'s personal collection of designer gowns made of *hablon* and other Panay textiles by renowned fashion designer **Rajo Laurel**, a real close pal of Pauline G. B.

Now, *palanggas*, get this to-die-for delights at the festival: Sinugba na Baboy na may Atsara, Adobado na Pantat na may Gata, my all-time favorite Kadios Baboy at Langka, Batchoy, Native Chicken Binakol, Linusgusan na Lukom, Ensaladang Langka, plus tons of other Ilonggo yummies.

Elegant décor touches by Ilonggo stylist extraordinaire **Robert Blancaflor** of 1816 Flowers were *trés* apparent.

Ilonggo personalities hobnobbing during lunch were **Gina Espinosa**, president of Museo Iloilo; hip, young socialites "free-again" **Alana Lopez Montelibano** and nice **Melissa Lopez Salvador**; the newest adopted daughter of Iloilo, **Joanne Ramirez** of People Magazine, who couldn't get enough of the yummies, some of which she was tasting for the first time; plus other Southern and *Manille* hotshots, *palanggas*.

Check out the festival. You'll definitely be back for more. I know I will.

For more info, call **Charisse G. Chuidian**, director of communications, at 8199667 or 7508888 ext. 2220. Fax 8199625 or e-mail charisse@mohg.com

## Ooops!

In last Friday's column, the names of **Pepper Teehankee**, **Johnny Litton** and **Millet Manaquil** were inadvertently omitted from one of the photographs. Sorry for the omission.

**BAMBI** Harper; Niel Tupaz III, Jo Mari Trenas, Tourism Undersecretary Salvador Sarabia Jr., Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr., Mita Bantug Rufino, Ana Mendoza, Garriceta-Banusing and Helmut Gaisberger

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# Intellectual dissent and the Church

**INNER AWARENESS**

*Jaime T. Licauco*

WHY IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN the Philippines panicking over a work of fiction? In the last three weeks, sermons of parish priests during Mass attacked Dan Brown's best-selling novel, "The Da Vinci Code," as well as National Geographic's newly released translation of the Gospel of Judas.

Even Opus Dei, which earlier took a "no-comment" stance on the novel, reportedly was preparing an official answer to Brown's fictitious portrayal of that organization as a murderous, shadowy and sinister Catholic sect. The movie version of the book will have a premiere on May 18.

Frankly, I couldn't see what the fuss is all about. For me the "Da Vinci Code" is a cleverly written and exciting thriller with a religious theme. Some of the topics the author raised are admittedly based on speculation and fantasy. But a number of them are historically true.

The novel has been attacked vehemently by the religious community for a number of supposed theological and historical errors. But every fiction writer is entitled to a certain degree of poetic license. Brown is no exception.

## Insulting

It is part of a healthy democratic society to have differences of opinion. The problem with some apologists of the Church is that, in their attempt to discredit the novel, they tend to insult the author rather than stick to the issues.

One Catholic critic, for example, questioned Brown's motives, saying he was only after the money, that's why he chose a controversial subject. Another said the author "is obviously anti-Christian."

Gee, all that Brown probably wanted to do was entertain his fellow Christians while provoking serious thought and stimulating discussion about the bases of their religious beliefs. Why should this produce so much anger and hostility from the religious hierarchy?

The problem, as I see it, is that the Catholic Church throughout its 2000-year history has never encouraged independent thinking and intellectual dissent among members. The faithful have always been treated like small children who cannot think for themselves. The Church cannot stand being questioned about its doctrines.

It is a matter of historical record that since the early formation and consolidation of the Christian Church in the fourth century, those who disagreed with official teachings were persecuted and banished by ecclesiastical authorities. Opposing beliefs were considered heretical, meaning, "not in conformity with the official teaching." Worse, they were regarded as "false" or "erroneous" teachings.

## Inquisition

The Church even established the dreaded Inquisition to run after heretics and burn them at the stakes. Hundreds of thousands were put to death on mere suspicion of being either a heretic or in league with the devil, including the innocent and great warrior Joan of Arc.

At that time, the Church could easily impose its beliefs on the mostly ignorant people and prevent them from knowing other opinions because it had control over all means of communication. This is no longer possible today because of so many alternative sources of information available to the average Christian.

Although the office of the Holy Inquisition has long been dissolved, a good number of priests and the Church's followers still have not gotten rid of the inquisitorial mentality. They still maintain a quaintly Medieval way of thinking.

One local dentist, for example, who proudly calls himself a "defender of the faith," recently lambasted Elaine Pagels, who has a doctorate degree in Religion from Harvard University, for her views on the Gnostic Gospels and the Gospel of Judas.

## Elementary

When I heard him speak during a symposium on the "Da Vinci Code" sponsored by a publishing house, I asked myself, "Between a doctor of dentistry and a doctor of religion, who should we believe when it comes to religious questions?" Elementary logic provides the obvious answer.

The Church has really nothing to worry about. Filipino Christians will not lose their faith because of a novel, or because of a newly found gospel, which deviates from the official teachings.

But Christian priests and ministers should be prepared to answer the many questions that the thinking population is bound to ask.

For example, why were Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist and Judas Iscariot marginalized by the Church when they all played very important roles in the life and mission of Jesus? Why was Peter chosen to head the apostles when it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus gave that assignment after his resurrection? Why do women play a very minor role in the Church, when Jesus obviously accorded them a special place when he was alive? What was the real relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus?

Jesus never once declared himself God. Who then declared him so? Is it not true that the books constituting the present Bible were decided by several councils beginning with the Council of Nicea in the year 325 AD? Weren't there so many gospels existing at the time? Why were only four chosen? What was the basis for the choice?

Several hundred bishops attending the Council of Nicea disagreed with the official choice of what should constitute the Bible. They were promptly banished by Emperor Constantine with the obvious consent of the Pope. Is this a correct course of action sanctioned by God?

Many more questions will be asked by the faithful which should be addressed by the Church.

# Mental aerobics

WELL AND GOOD

*Tina Juan*

RESEARCH INDICATES THAT physical exercise enhances mental alertness, concentration, focus, memory, decision-making, multitasking and reaction time.

But exercise isn't the only thing that keeps your brain functioning at its best. Mental or intellectual stimulation is also essential for a healthy brain.

## Neurobics

Neurobiology professor Lawrence Katz coined the term "neurobics" in 1999 to describe his "mental aerobics" program. It is based on the idea that brain cells learn by making new connections with other brain cells, and that a large part of the brain is used to analyze sensory stimulus from the outside world.

Neurobics has become a generic name for mental exercises but a genuine neurobic exercise has to have all these three components: It must involve one or more senses in a novel way, engage your attention and add an unexpected element to a routine activity.

Katz calls it "cross-training your brain." He suggests the following simple but "unusual" exercises from his book "Keep Your Brain Alive."

- Instead of waking to the usual smell of freshly brewed coffee, try smelling something different—such as vanilla, peppermint or rosemary. Linking this new aroma with your morning routine will activate new neural pathways.
- Go through your morning rituals—such as combing your hair, brushing your teeth, styling your hair, applying makeup, getting dressed, eating your breakfast and so on, using your non-dominant hand.
- Shower with your eyes closed. Locate the taps, soap and so on, adjust water temperature and flow, and wash yourself using just your tactile senses. Also try closing your eyes as you get into your car, find your keys and start the car—and when finding your keys and opening the door when you return home.
- Make a "sensory canister" containing such aromatic substances as sage, thyme or cloves and take a whiff when you dial a certain phone number. See if it helps you remember the number.
- Go to new markets, such as an ethnic market, farmers' market or bakery, to experience new sights and aromas.

For more information, go to www.neurobics.com/exercise.html.

## Memory exercises

"Working memory" is the temporary storage of information you need to carry out everyday tasks like remembering oral driving instructions or going to the supermarket with a mental shopping list. It's also the memory needed to solve a math problem or read effortlessly.

Sudoku, the numerical logic puzzle craze, is a fun (and sometimes frustrating) way to improve working memory. Psychologist Neil Stewart of Warwick University writes, "In a Sudoku puzzle, one needs to hold some digits in mind whilst examining the possibilities for filling in squares. Psychologists have found that this quite specific ability is highly correlated with a person's fluid intelligence, that is, how clever you are independent of your general knowledge. In a sense, this ability to hold information in mind, whilst working on a problem, is a prime piece of the mental toolbox that makes us clever. So, rather unsurprisingly, if you're good at Sudoku, you're probably a clever person."

Crossword puzzles, meanwhile, are a test of your general knowledge. Specifically, how broad your vocabulary is.

If you have ever wondered where you put your car keys or struggled to remember the name attached to a familiar face, you have just experienced a "senior moment." But things aren't as bad as they sound.

Based on a CNN interview with Dr. Barry Gordon of Johns Hopkins University, "intelligent memory" is different from the kind of memory needed to remember where you last placed things. It's the kind of memory that makes you grow wiser as you grow older.

"Intelligent memory helps people figure things out faster and sparks creativity. It does this by storing memories and skills learned over time. The brain then uses this knowledge to help it learn automatically by itself. This makes it easier to understand situations and solve problems very quickly—sometimes even subconsciously."

There really is no substitute for the wisdom that comes with experience. But constantly forgetting simple things can be quite irritating. Luckily, there are techniques available to improve memory skills, no matter what your age is.

For example, to remember a name, look for an unusual feature in the person's face and associate it with his/her name. Repeat the person's name as often as you can during the conversation. For more memory exercises, go to www.mindtools.com.

## New brainteasers

Doing the same thing, no matter how intellectually stimulating, is not as effective as learning new skills, according to neuroanatomist Marian Diamond.

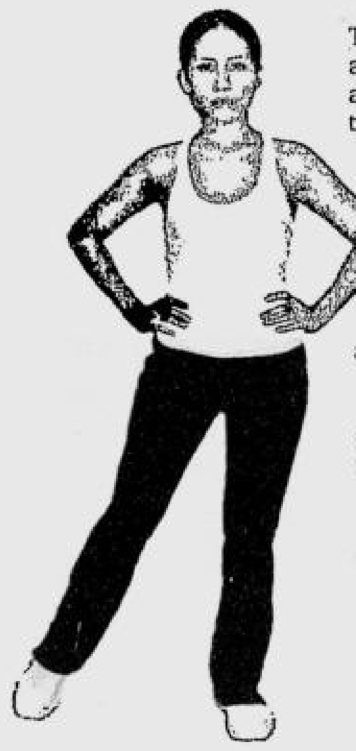
She writes, "It is not enough to continue activities in the same groove, year after year, with the same expenditure of mental and physical energy. The brain needs new challenges if it is to remain a healthy, functioning organ. Translated, if you have been working on the same kind of crossword puzzles year after year, it is time to advance to more complicated puzzles or to introduce a new game that will challenge different skills that are lying dormant."

*Next week: Food for thought*

*Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info*

### EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

## *Standing side leg lift*



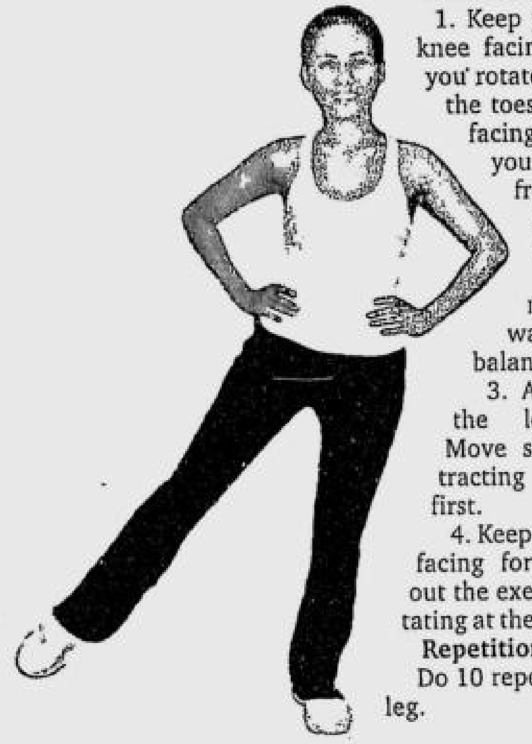
THIS EXERCISE TIGHTENS and tones muscles in the hip and buttocks. The muscles of the leg you stand on while doing the exercise are also being strengthened.

**Equipment:**

For greater resistance, use ankle weights or tie a rubber band above your knees (easier) or around your ankles (harder).

**Exercise technique:**

1. Stand with your hands on your hips and with your right leg out to the side.
2. Lift your leg.
3. Slowly lower it down to starting position.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions, then switch sides.
5. Optional: Before switching to the other side, hold the leg in lifted position and do 10 short quick pulses.



**Performance tips:**

1. Keep your toes and knee facing forward. If you rotate your leg and the toes and knee are facing the ceiling, you will work the front of the thighs instead of the hip.
2. If you need to, use a wall or chair for balance.
3. Avoid swinging the leg sideways. Move slowly by contracting the muscle first.
4. Keep your shoulders facing forward throughout the exercise. Avoid rotating at the waist.

**Repetitions:**

Do 10 repetitions on each leg.

# Karate is her game

JAMIE LIM, DAUGHTER OF BASKETBALL icon Samboy "Skywalker" Lim, is not exactly a chip off the old block.

Though more and more girls are going into basketball now, the 9-year-old is learning self-defense at the Milo Karatedo Summer Sports Clinic.

While she is not sure if she will pursue the sport as a professional, she does enjoy the experience.

Her father says getting into karatedo has resulted in major improvement in her personality. She is now more confident, and mingles with a lot of other kids.

He says he's happy about it because the benefits of sports are imparted to children. He encourages other parents to enroll their children in the program because it is good for physical and social development.

Conducted under the auspices of the Association for the Advancement of Karatedo (AAK), the Milo Karatedo Summer Sports Clinic teaches kids the fundamentals of the sport in a unique and scientific manner.

The clinic is headed by AAK senior instructor and national team coach Juan Carlos "Chino" Veguillas.

The Milo Summer Sports Clinics also feature courses on badminton, basketball, bowling, chess, football, gymnastics, ice skating, lawn tennis, muay, swimming, squash, table tennis, taekwondo, volleyball and wall climbing.

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SAMBOY "Skywalker" Lim's daughter Jamie is into sports even if it's not basketball.

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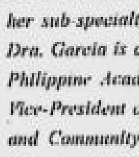
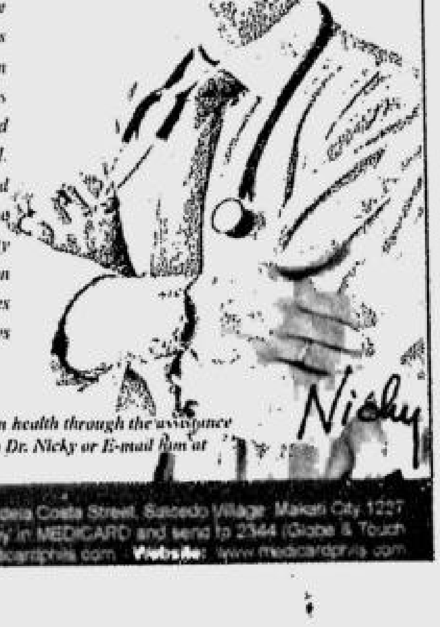
*What are the treatment methods for patients with Asthma?*

Airflow limitation in asthma is a result of mucosal edema, bronchospasm and mucous plugging. Therefore, treatment for asthma is intended towards reversal of these processes. The use of bronchodilators like salbutamol or terbutaline through nebulization or oral intake is the first line of treatment. The antiinflammatory action of corticosteriods addresses the problem of mucosal edema. Methylxanthines like theophylline is considered the second or third line of medication for asthma. Its narrow range of toxicity limits its use Non-steroidal antiinflammatory agents or NSAIDS are used in prophylaxis of asthma by reducing bronchial hyperreactivity and symptoms induced by irritants, antigens and excercise. Non-pharmacologic control of asthma attacks is a basic mode of treatment, wherein patients made aware of those allergens and irritants that stimulate asthma attacks



*This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our seven-year medical service provider from General Santos City, Dr. Maria Helena Veneracion-Garcia. Dra. Helena as she commonly addressed by her patients specializes in Pediatric Pulmonology. She finished her medicine proper from UERMMMC and later took her specialization course for Pediatrics at The Medical City General Hospital in 1995. She then completed her sub-specialty training for Pulmonology in 1998 at UP-PGH. Dra. Garcia is a diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society and Philippine Academy of Pediatric Pulmonologists. She is also the Vice-President of the Pediatric Association of General Santos City and Community Pediatric Society of the Philippines, SocSarGen Chapter. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at St. Elizabeth Hospital, The Medical Plaza, Room 103, Mondays to Saturdays from 9am-12noon and 2pm-5pm.*



Nicky

*MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.*

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